

The orient News

Truth, Justice and Conscience

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Muslim nations agree on joint response

Inside story
By Afshain Afzal

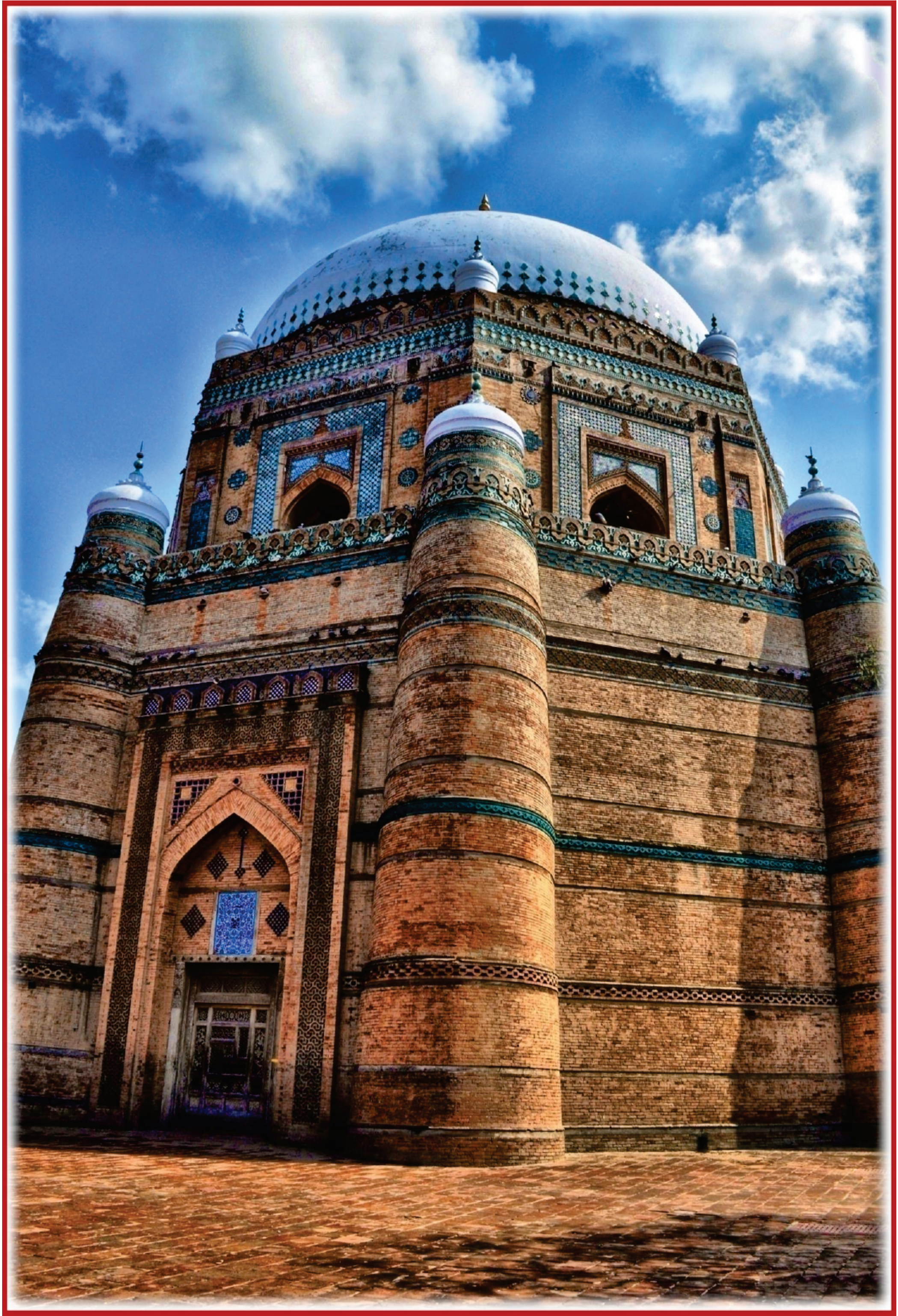
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AL-AQSA

under attack

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THE ORIENT NEWS

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

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

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

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ABOUT

As a digital as well as non-formal information hub of handpicked prompt News analysis, inside stories, commentaries and numerous other features "The Orient News" in many ways, is a value addition to already robust social, electronic and print Media. It endeavors to restore old grandeur of journalistic excellence and set standards for different types of media.

The Orient News is designed as a platform to identify policy and institutional loopholes, monitor implementation and enforce accountability standards through rule of law, liaison with relevant institutions and public interest litigations. Our mission is to remove criminal behavior and materialistic tendencies from the societies and promote high ethical, cultural, traditional and religious standards set in each society by narrative building through social, electronic, print, digital media and its hybrids.

We started our efforts with a single man i.e. the present patron-in-chief and later, from several dozen aims to grow to 50,000 in years to come.

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Muslims united stance against Israel

Writing New Pages in History



**Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Muslim
nations agree on joint response**

Are the hands of United Nations Organization tied and incapable to perform its obligations?

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal



Few hours back Israeli air attacks killed at least 31 Palestinians, injuring 54 including children and women in Gaza City. In a new wave of Israeli raids on Gaza by Israeli aircrafts, Benjamin Netanyahu announced that he will continue attacks 'as long as necessary'. Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip destroyed homes including a senior Hamas leader in Gaza but he was not there but family members were reportedly killed. The latest attempt to silence Palestinians is unprecedented while UN Secretary General is only issuing statement for formality. Around 176 people, including children and women have been killed in the Gaza Strip.

At the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's request, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held Open-Ended Ministerial Executive Committee meeting on 16 May 2021, to discuss developments in Palestine.

Saudi Arabia, chair of the Islamic Summit,

Earlier pressure from United States paralysed the United Nations Organization to independently and freely play its role. The UN Security Council was compelled to restrict to discussion on mere the worsening violence between Israel and Palestinian militants, after pressure from US at the meeting this Friday. We need to realize that Security Council's powers under Chapter VII of the Charter to authorise the use of force, and the right of self-defence recognised in Article 51 of the Charter, are adequate to address current threats. United Nations can also pass resolution for peacekeeping operations to support the implementation of a cease-fire or a peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians. principle of the non-use of force as embodied in Article 2, paragraph 4. Who can deny that the United Nations can use of force to avert an overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe. Even if the Israel claims that it was in self defence, which was not at all as videos are available

Turkish Foreign Minister "De-escalation and the highest degree of restraint are important to avoid dragging the region to new levels of instability,"

the Organization of Islamic Cooperation will issue final Communique adopted by the virtual emergency meeting of OIC Committee of Permanent representatives to discuss aggression by Israel, occupying power in Palestinian territories, in particular Al Quds Al Shareef (East Jerusalem).

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, addressing the meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation condemned what he called the violation of the sanctity of Islamic holy sites. He condemned Israel's "flagrant violations" of Palestinian rights and called for global action to end military operations while fellow Gulf states that forged ties with Israel said a ceasefire was needed for regional stability. He also denounced the "forcible" eviction of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem and urged the international community to end this "dangerous escalation" and revive peace negotiations based on a two-state solution.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu addressing the meeting said that Israel should be held accountable for war crimes and that the International Criminal Court could play a role. He also called for an international protection mechanism for Palestinian civilians.

UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation Reem al-Hashimy called for a ceasefire and stressed the importance of preserving the identity of Jerusalem, which contains sites sacred to Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

as evidence of Israeli aggression before the violence started. No doubt, prohibition against the use of force is a cornerstone of the United Nations Charter and citing Article 2.4, the Court continued: 'Article 51 of the Charter may justify a use of force in self-defence only within the strict confines there laid down. It does not allow the use of force by a State to protect perceived security interests beyond these parameters.

One wonders, the United Nations Organization is considered as an instrument of peace in the world then should it work on the political dictates of powerful nations? The coercive tactics adopted by the United States and Israel are in violations of International law and Charter of the United Nations. Who can deny that international law permits the use of force in self-defence against an imminent attack but does not authorize the use of force to mount a preemptive attack against a threat that is remote or non-existent. Use of force is a measure of last resort to be employed only where absolutely necessary but is it fair to kill 176 Palestinians in bombing and aerial attacks just to implement a local court order for the eviction. It is high time that United Nations Organization should act wisely and deliver its obligations to pronounce Israel as aggressor and accountable for war crimes while the International Criminal Court may carry out trial of all those Israelis behind the holocaust.

Writing new pages of history: Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Muslim nations agree on joint response

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

In the backdrop nad reaction of continuous raids by Israeli security forces in occupied East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank as well as Al Aqsa Mosque during prayers and creating hindrances by Israeli Police trying to stop Palestinians from accessing the Old City since the holy month of Ramadan,

other than those agreed by the two sides through negotiations.

In the second week of May 2021, Saudi Arabia took the command-role to organize Muslims' assembly at the holy land. Turkey was first to respond, followed by whole Muslim Ummah which assembled at Saudi Arabia to discuss single point agenda on Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Israeli oppression against the Palestinian. Where Hamas took initiative and bombarded

Islamic Cooperation, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud took principle stance and condemned the violation of the sanctity of Islamic holy sites, Israel's flagrant violations of Palestinian rights, forcible eviction of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem and called for global action to end military operations. He also denounced the forcible" eviction of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem and urged the international community to revive peace negotiations based on a two-state solution. The fellow Gulf states that forged ties with Israel in carefully drafted statements said a ceasefire was needed for regional stability. UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation Reem al-Hashimy called for a ceasefire and stressed the importance of preserving the identity of Jerusalem, which contains sites sacred to Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu addressing the meeting said that Israel should be held accountable for war crimes and that the International Criminal Court could play a role. He also called for an international protection mechanism for Palestinian civilians. He added, "De-escalation and the highest degree of restraint are important to avoid dragging the region to new levels of instability." Earlier under the pressure from United States, United Nations Organization acted as totally paralysed and failed to play its role independently and freely. The UN Security Council was compelled to restrict to discussion on mere the worsening violence between Israel and Palestinian militants, after pressure from US at the meeting. For the first time, all the Muslims countries have joined hands to equip the Palestinians to fight against Israeli oppression and these countries are discussing openly to launch operations against aggressors to implement UNSC Resolutions. The fact cannot be denied that if such arrangement is made, Israel due to its location inside the Muslims nations, it cannot survive more than three days nut Muslims are sympathetic about Jews as they were expelled from the lands and homes in Europe and elsewhere and dumped in the

Muslim lands.

US President Joseph Biden announced that his Democratic Party supported Israel and paved way for ceasefire between Israelis and Hamas. President Biden claimed that a two-state solution was the only answer to resolving the conflict between the two sides, and pledged to build a major package with other countries to help rebuild Gaza. President Biden attempts are aimed to engage Hamas and Palestinians in an arrangement that allow western actors to enter Gaza and other Palestinian areas in the name of development. The sources at Washington revealed that White House and Pentagon have chalked out plans to legalize International Non-Governmental Organization and foreign diplomats to carryout development work and establish educational and women empowerment institutions with the coordination of Palestinian Authority as well as Hamas as well as other Palestinian representative organizations. This would be undertaken on the condition that Palestinian would ensure demilitarisation of Palestinian territories including destruction of Hamas' military arsenal.

Almost all the Western countries and non-Muslim countries agree on a two-state solution. Some countries demand Israel to be declared independent international country where all divine faiths might be allowed to visit without visa. For both Israel and Palestinian states, they should have sovereignty and territorial integrity guaranteed by the United Nations Organization and beside agreement between stakeholders, it should be backed by international guarantors including all the VETO powers and other nations. One wonders Palestinian should not take any step in haste; should not sign any agreement regarding economic development or acceptance of International Organizations etc till the time Hamas is recognized as Palestinian representative and international guarantors including UNO, all the VETO powers and other nations should guarantee establishment of Palestine as independent and sovereign state with capital as Jerusalem.



Palestinian decided to retaliate. The confidence and legality of taking punitive against Israel had spring through the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 242, which called for Israel to withdraw from occupied lands to secure and recognize borders in exchange for peace and UNSC Resolution 2334 (2016), where the Security Council reaffirmed that Israel's establishment of settlements in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, had no legal validity, constituting a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the vision of two States living side-by-side in peace and security, within internationally recognized borders. The Council reiterated its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities and it would not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem,

several hundred missiles each day at Israel-security forces' positions to implement UNSC Resolutions, the Muslims decided to knock the door of United Nation Organization but if failed give a united response to implement United Nations Organizations against Israel. including, following the expiration of the group's ultimatum demanding Israel stand down forces from the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem. Hamas launched missiles from the unidentified coastal territory towards Israel. Israel, on the other hand launched indiscriminate continuous aerial bombing that killed Palestinians including children and women in the attacks. Meanwhile, the Saudi Arabia Royal Air Force was in desperate need of Turkish armed drones to accomplish the missions in support of Palestinians.

At the meeting of the Organisation of

Muslim countries also agree to the same under few conditions, most importantly, "A two-state solution would require recognition of both Israel and Palestine, on first place under United Nations Organization guarantee, as independent sovereign nations. Palestine, while on the other hand, should be established under United Nations Organization guarantee to have its capital in East Jerusalem".



Dirty Game of Legitimate Genocide in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir - Fake encounters

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

Can genocide be legitimate? So far no one has been able to trace any such reference in International Law, Statutes or Conventions that allow genocide to be legitimate and legal. But Indian Army has found a novel strategy that authorizes them under the law to carryout genocide of innocent Kashmiris without any restriction or accountability. Now it is an open secret that about 33 kilometers south of Srinagar, Awantipora is located, where the Headquarters of Victor Force is engaged in terrorist activities against the Kashmiri masses and neighbouring Pakistan. The former General Officer Commanding (GOC) 15 Corps, Lieutenant General BS Raju spent

Hundreds of innocent Kashmiris have been so far recruited and forced to join peaceful Kashmiri protesters in the guise of militant cadres to approach local populations to convince them to target Indian Army and security forces. In case any odd person joins them, an operation is launched to misguide international media about terrorist activities by Kashmiris. If we recall, Indian troops carried out state sponsored terrorism on 5 May this year and martyred three Kashmiri youth in Jan Mohalla area of Shopian district. The operation was jointly launched by the personnel of Indian Army, Central Reserve Police Force and police. Indian intelligence agencies staged drama and showed that one of their agents namely Tausif Ahmad has surrendered before the Indian security forces. Tausif Ahmad was feed to share story that he is a newly recruited terrorist and was trained across Line of

four Mujahideen belonging to Al Badr outfit were trapped in the cordon. Early morning Indian authorities claimed that the firefight took place after a joint team of Indian Army and the police cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific intelligence input about the presence of four terrorists. Locals of the area claimed that four Kashmiri youth who were already in military custody were shown to have trapped within the cordon and later killed in the joint operation. To this regard, an officer of 50 Rashtriya Rifles confirmed, "at least one official of the battalion was fired upon during a cordon-and-search operation and injured who was executed to 192 Base Hospital Srinagar while one militant has been killed in the ongoing gunfight. However identity of the slain militant is yet to be ascertained." Local witnesses confirmed that four Kashmiris were evacuated to unidentified location by Indian military personnel in military type ambulance.

After the operation, statement to the media said, "Today morning a gunfight broke out at village Khanmoh here in which two militants were killed. Gunfight in the area started after joint contingents of police, paramilitary and army cordoned off the area. No sooner they reached the suspected area, they came under heavy fire, thereby evoking a retaliation." The official statement by Inspector General Police Vijay Kumar at 0650 hours

revealed that four militants were hiding in Khanmoh area. A joint operation by troops of Rashtriya Rifles, Special Operation Group CPRF, Jammu and Kashmir Police killed all four of them. He added that slain Kashmiri youth belonged to Al Badr militant outfit. The evidence that the 17th May operation was fake can also be judged the fact that Indian authorities confirmed the militant outfit they belonged, "Al Badr" but did not reveal the name of single militant killed in the encounter. Till next day neither Jammu and Kashmir Police could identify the dead bodies nor reveal their names. How it is possible then that Indian security agencies were so sure that they belonged to militant group "Al Badr but never knew their names.



tenure here as commander of Victor Force that performs counter-terrorism operations in the area of responsibility. The strategy adopted is that anyone who talks about raising voice for the independence of Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution is operated upon; either eliminated or isolated through series of operations and if apprehended tortured to join Indian intelligence service as Special Police Officers (SPOs) and Under Ground Workers (UGW) for the Indian Army and Delta Company of Border Security Force (BSF). Otherwise he is killed in fake operations or declared dead as result of contracting COVID-19 and buried without letting the dead body handed over to the family.

Control. The operation was aimed to target unarmed Kashmiri protesters and malign Pakistan in state sponsored terrorism. Through such methods, Indian security forces launch extensive house-to-house searches in the region and dozens of Kashmiri youth have been killed in such fake and self-engineered cordon and search operations.

In the latest act of state sponsored terrorism, Indian Army's 17th May planned-operation started at Khanmoh, on the outskirts of Srinagar on early morning, where a gunfight was initiated to show the Indian and foreign media that terrorists and security forces are exchanging fire at Khanmoh area. Indian military and Jammu and Kashmir Police sources confirmed joint operation against militants was in progress and

A comparison between an official statement by Inspector General Police Vijay Kashmir at 0650 hours that four militants were hiding in Khanmoh area and killed in the operation and later official tweets by Jammu and Kashmir Police that only two were killed, speaks of fowl play. At 0700 hours the Jammu and Kashmir Police tweeted, "While a team of both the Army and the police collectively have secured the encounter site. And there was a tip-off about the presence of two or three militants hiding in the area" At 1100 hours, "One terrorist killed in ongoing encounter at Khanmoh area of Srinagar: Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir". In another tweet at the same time "Two terrorists killed in the encounter were from Al-Badr terror outfit: IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar told ANI". Another tweet said, "Police received info about 2 terrorists hiding in Khanmoh area last night. With Army & CRPF, they cordoned off the area. They appealed to terrorists to surrender but on failure, encounter started today. 2 terrorists associated with Al-Badr terror outfit were killed: IGP Kashmir." One wonders how long international community and UNO will remain silent spectators to the genocide of pro-Independence Kashmiris in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Is India terrorizing the world?

Fake exaggerated COVID death-toll exposed

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

The Indian government intentionally projected officially fake and exaggerated death toll as result of third wave of a new variant of COVID-19 to win sympathies and billions of dollars in aid. However, the drama to win international sympathies and aid has been exposed. Despite international exposure, till to-date New Delhi is amendment to prove that their published official data to World Health Organization (WHO), International Organizations, International Non Governmental Organizations and other countries through diplomatic channels is correct and authentic. In the recent development, India media supported by not less than Vice Chancellor of a 100 years old University, having International Ranking of under 1000, presented a horrible baseless picture to harass and terrorize general Indian public and masses of countries around the world. This time India came up with a new

May 2021, "Forty-four employees of the Aligarh Muslim University - 19 professors and 25 non-teaching staff - have died after contracting the COVID virus" NDTV continued, "Around 16,000 Aligarh Muslim University students stay in 19 hostels and many of whom stayed on in the earlier wave - when the university was shut - but now even they are leaving. Now 50-60 students are compelled to stay because they are working on or submitting their thesis." Newspaper 'The Hindustan Times' reported on 11 May 2021, "To note, 15 Aligarh Muslim University professors have died of COVID and three of non-COVID." To further authenticate the alarming situation, the Aligarh Muslim University Vice Chancellor, Tariq Mansoor has been quoted in media to have said, "The university's cemetery is now full. This is a huge tragedy. A lot of big doctors and senior professors, including a dean and a chairman, have died. Young people - who are fit and healthy - have also died." The other India print and social



a rejoinder, Professor Siddiqui said "Aligarh Muslim University has been bereaved of 18 faculty members since the onset of second Covid wave, out of which 15 were either COVID or suspected Covid patients. Three patients have died because of non-COVID reasons such as Brain Tuberculosis and liver disease. And moreover, out of the 15 COVID or suspected COVID deaths, four have occurred outside Aligarh". He added,

India in the recent day and India could not return them or do anything due to their refugee statuses. The fact remains that Bangladesh had been repeatedly protesting against Indian border guards who push Rohingya across the border into Bangladesh. Since last ten days Bangladesh has tighten the security and is not allowing India to push people without valid documents. Indian State Water Resources

The Vice Chancellor's letter said, "This is to bring into your notice that 16 Aligarh Muslim University faculty members, a number of retired teachers and employees in other categories, who were living in the university campus and adjoining localities have succumbed to COVID-19. This is giving rise to a suspicion that a particular viral variant may be circulating in the Civil Lines area of Aligarh in which Aligarh Muslim University and many adjoining localities

strategy that in a single Indian educational institution, "Aligarh Muslim University", forty four university employees including 19 Professors and 25 non-teaching staff have died after contracting a new variant of COVID-19 virus this month. Indian newspapers and social media channels are projecting unbelievable COVID related mass death, thousands each day. It is assumed that New Delh is hiding the facts and due to mismanagement is unable to control COVID, causing thousands of unreported deaths. On 10 May 2021, 'Outlook India' reported, "34 Aligarh Muslim University Professors succumb to COVID -19, in last 18 days" while 'New Indian Express' reported, "34 deaths in 18 days: Worry as COVID kills many in Aligarh Muslim Universit faculty, V-C writes to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)." The newspaper, 'The Hindu' reported on 9 May 2021, "After 16 of its faculty members, other employees and retired teachers living in the vicinity of the campus died of COVID-19, Aligarh Muslim University has written to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) asking for an analysis of the samples to find out what was behind the surge". NDTV reported on 11

media also carried out same propaganda. The truth cannot be denied that Aligarh Muslim University's Public Relations Officer, Omar Peerzada when asked about the high number of Aligarh Muslim University staff who died of COVID-19, Mr. Peerzada said, "The university is deeply concerned with the death of its faculty members, including retired teachers and other employees. The list which is being circulated on social media includes the names of several retired faculty members who were residing outside Aligarh. Non-COVID deaths are also included in this list." In the same regard, interestingly, on 10 May 2021, the Chief Medical Superintendent and Principal, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College of Aligarh Muslim University, Prof Shahid Ali Siddiqui has rejected the exaggerated figure of deaths telecast round the clock rounds on social media. He clarified, "with onset of the second wave of COVID-19, eighteen serving faculty members unfortunately succumbed to the virus. Eleven passed away at JNMC, three lost live in private hospitals in Aligarh and four died outside Aligarh." In



"These social media posts have also wrongly mentioned that the retired faculty members who died in the past one-month were all undergoing treatment at JNMC. We like to make it clear that many of these superannuated faculty members were not even in Aligarh at the time of their deaths" In another fake drama this week, hundreds of decomposed bodies were found in the Ganga river in Bihar's Buxar district and it was projected that they died of COVID-19 and thrown into the river. Yesterday, an additional around one hundred of floating corpses were spotted in the river near Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh. The District Magistrate of Ghazipur claims that an investigation is underway. On 11 May, the Bihar government confirmed that altogether 71 bodies were fished out from the Ganges in Buxar district, where these were found floating in the river and linked it with deaths due to COVID-19. However, there is strong suspicion that in both Buxar and Ghazipur, the abandoned corpses could be those of Rohingya refugees, who illegally crossed to

Minister Sanjay Kumar, claimed that the bodies had flown downstream from neighbouring Uttar Pradesh while doctors have confirmed upon post-mortem that the deaths had taken place four to five days ago. It was quite insulting when Minister Sanjay Kumar remarked that the tragedy is aimed to "harm holy river Ganga". India is today bent upon proving fake date about surge in COVID deaths and can go to any degree to save its international image. Whatever the case may be, Indian government is exploiting the situation in order to to win international sympathies and aid but, in fact, it is terrorizing the world by sharing false alarming situation due to unaccountable COVID related death in India and creating fear among general masses. It is the responsibility of United Nations Organizations (UNO), European Union and Human Rights organization to investigate the matter and stop India's state machinery as well as the so called Indian pro-active media from terrorizing the world.

Indian Health Ministry backs out from "Indian variant" of COVID-19

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

All lies and baseless stories of alarming situation and uncontrollable death in India faded with a single Inside Story by The Orient News, "Is India terrorizing the world? Fake exaggerated COVID death-toll exposed" published on 12 May 2021. Where are the dead-bodies, who carried them from hospitals and burnt or buried them. India has no answer but media reports, "The Muslims did the job and cremated Hindu's dead bodies, each day in hundreds in various cities".

All these weeks and months, Indian authorities kept quiet and now Indian Union Health Ministry is quick to issue rebuttals about deadly "Indian variant" of Coronavirus. Indian Union Health Ministry on 12 May 2021, clarified that WHO has not used the word "Indian" for B.1.617 mutant of the novel coronavirus, hence cannot be termed as "Indian Variant". The ministry dismissed as "without any basis and unfounded" media reports that have used the term "Indian variant" for the B.1.617 mutant strain. The statement said, "Several media reports have covered the news of World Health Organisation (WHO) classifying B.1.617 as variant of global concern. Some of these reports have termed the B.1.617 variant of the coronavirus as an 'Indian Variant'." He added, "These media reports are without any basis, and unfounded."

Al Jazeera quoting French Health Minister Olivier Veran reported on 10 May 2021, "the coronavirus variant first detected in India appears to be on the rise in France, which has now recorded at least 20 cases. It said, Olivier Veran told French news channel LCI that people affected had

been identified in five small clusters. Veran's comments came as concerns grow over the strain as B.1.617 is linked to a devastating wave of infections in India. It has since spread outwards to about 20 other countries, including several European nations, prompting fresh travel restrictions with India."

Al Jazeera reported, "WHO says the variant has already spread to more than a dozen countries, forcing nations to cut or restrict movements from India." It reported, prominent US disease modeller Chris Murray, from the University of Washington, said the sheer magnitude of infections in India in a short period of time suggests an "escape variant" may be overpowering any prior immunity from natural infections. Infections are now spreading from overcrowded cities to remote rural villages that are home to nearly 70 percent of the 1.3 billion population.

Media reported that India's healthcare system is crumbling under the weight of patients, with hospitals running out of beds and medical oxygen. Morgues and crematoriums cannot handle the number of dead and makeshift funeral pyres burn in parks and car parks. However, on ground it is not true. There are deaths indeed as these used to occur since last many years. This time the same deaths which were recorded to have taken place due to different diseases are categorized under "Death due to COVID-19". It is high time that the World Health Organization, United Nations Organizations and medical and health organization probe the hospital record of dead, to find out the truth and save the world community from fears and apprehensions that they are about to die due to COVID. afshainafzal@yahoo.com



The paper quoting Reuters news agency reported, "BBC said scientists in the United Kingdom have flagged evidence that the Indian variant of the virus spreads more quickly than its original version. It said, scientists have recommended that one version of the variant first found in India, known as B.1.617.2, is designated a "variant of concern", adding more than 500 cases of the variant had been recorded, up from 202 last week."



India revises COVID-19 Policy as foreign nations doubt data of deaths and COVID-19 positive cases

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

India's Union Health Ministry on Saturday announced that anyone can get admitted in COVID-19 designated hospital and there is no requirement of a positive COVID-19 test report. Functional hospitals like Community Health Centres (CHC) and others, which are handling regular and non-COVID cases have been designated as COVID Care Centres (CCC).

Meanwhile, foreign health and International Non Government Organizations (IGNO) and others aid groups have expressed serious doubt on data furnished by Indian Health authorities regarding COVID-19 positive cases and deaths due to COVID. One of the member of aid group spoke on the condition of anonymity that state provided videos of extreme alarming situation throughout India proved to be fake. Indian Health authorities recently shared data that the number of cases across the country surged by a record daily rise of 349,691 case with a total of 16.96 million cases including 192,311 deaths, however, these figures could not be verified by any authentic source. The foreign members of aid group found that on ground many hospital beds are empty or unoccupied with no COVID-19 patient at all. The hospital data also reflected the same and authenticated apprehensions.

The Indian health authorities have declared positive COVID-19 test report as non-mandatory for admission to a health facility throughout the country.

The directive to all the states and Union Territories said, "Hospitals under the central government, state governments and UT administration, including private hospitals managing COVID patients, shall ensure that requirement of a positive test for COVID-19 virus is not mandatory for admission to a COVID health facility. A suspect case shall be admitted to the suspect ward of COVID Care Centre (CCC), Dedicated COVID Health Centre (DCHC) of Dedicated COVID Hospital (DHC) as the case may be," It said, "No patient shall be refused admission on the ground that he/she is not able to produce a valid identity card that does not belong to the city where the hospital is located."

In the same regard, the Health Ministry has issued letters to all the chief secretaries of states/Union territories to issue necessary orders and circulars, incorporating these directions within three days, which shall be enforced till replaced by an appropriate uniform policy.

Countries across the world as well as the World health Organization and other International Organizations are contributing best they could do in global efforts to send urgent life-saving supplies to India, following the rapid resurgence of COVID-19 in the country. Critical equipment such as oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders, electric syringe pumps, medical respirator masks and therapeutics and other equipments have been arriving in India through diplomatic and non-diplomatic channels to treat patients and save lives. Over a billion dollar has so far been contributed by generous countries The WHO and other International groups technical staff arrived in India under various programmes and aid packages distribution filed to find situation that alarming as being reflected by the State authorities. One wonders how can any nation plat with the sentiment of world community by claiming fake deaths and alarming out of control situation.



In a written intimation, the Union Health Ministry in its revised national policy for admission of COVID patients to various dedicated health facilities, both public and private exempted requirement of a positive COVID-19 test report for admission to a health facility and directed that no patient will be refused services on any account, including oxygen and essential drugs, even if he or she belongs to a different city.



Human Rights Record of Indian Government and Coronavirus Pandemic

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

The reports by Human Rights and International organization in the recent past has opened the eye of the world that how Indian leadership treats its minority, especially the Muslims in India. With the outbreak of COVID-19 there was Anti-Muslim rhetoric surge. In March, after Indian authorities announced that they found a large number of COVID-19 positive cases among Muslims who had attended a mass religious congregation in New Delhi and reflected Muslims as carriers of Coronavirus. Some BJP leaders called the meeting a "Talibani crime" and "CoronaTerrorism." Some pro-government media had labeled "CoronaJihad" and social media platforms were flooded by calls for social and economic boycotts of Muslims. There were also numerous physical attacks on Muslims, including volunteers distributing relief material, amid falsehoods accusing them of spreading the virus deliberately. The COVID-19 lockdown disproportionately hurt marginalized communities due to loss of livelihoods and lack of food, shelter, health care, and other basic needs. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government increasingly harassed, arrested, and prosecuted rights defenders, activists, journalists, students, academics, and others critical of the government or its policies. The Indian government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi imposed harsh and discriminatory restrictions on Muslim-majority areas in Jammu and Kashmir. Attacks continued against minorities, especially Muslims, even as authorities failed to take action against BJP leaders were found guilty.

Hundreds of people remained detained without charge in Jammu and Kashmir under the draconian Public Safety Act. The restrictions,

including on access to communications networks, since August 2019 adversely affected livelihoods, particularly in the tourism-dependent Kashmir Valley. The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries estimated that the first three months of the lockdown to prevent protests since August 2019 cost the economy over US\$2.4 billion, for which no redress was provided. Losses nearly doubled since the government imposed further restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19 in March 2020. During the pandemic, despite



internet was a fundamental right, Indian authorities permitted only slow-speed 2G mobile internet services, leading doctors to complain that the lack of internet was hurting the COVID-19 response.

The pandemic made access to the internet crucial for information, communication, education, and business. However, even after the Supreme Court said in January that access to the internet was a fundamental right, authorities permitted only slow-speed 2G mobile internet services, leading doctors to complain that the lack of internet was hurting the COVID-19 response.

There were calls for social and economic boycotts of Muslims. There were also numerous physical attacks on Muslims, including volunteers distributing relief material, amid falsehoods accusing them of spreading the virus deliberately. Similarly those journalists who were reporting on COVID-19, faced criminal cases, arrest, threat, or even physical assault by mobs or police. In many cases, they were independent journalists working in rural India, targeted for their criticism of the government's handling of the pandemic.

Children's Rights were violated as schools remained closed from March onwards and are still closed, affecting more than 280 million students and threatening to reverse the progress made in access to education for the poor, especially those who attended government schools. In most states, government schools did not deliver education during the lockdown, putting children from marginalized communities such as Dalit, tribal, and Muslims at greater risk of dropping out, and being pushed into child labor and early marriage. Girls were even more vulnerable.



Supreme Court verdict in January that access to the



Where the US government and the European Union said very little about India's human rights record, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation criticized the "unrelenting vicious Islamophobic campaign in India maligning Muslims for spread of COVID-19." The World Health Organization also cautioned against profiling COVID-19 cases "on the basis of racial, religious and ethnic lines." It is high time that the United Nations Organization must take action on the reports of human rights groups and International organizations and save Indian minorities including Muslims from sufferings and humiliation.

Mismanagement and futility of Indian government in fight against COVID-19

OPINION

By TON Research Section



Furthermore, hundreds and thousands of farmers are protesting from November 2020, against three new agriculture laws passed by PM Modi. The protests entered into ninth month despite the escalating coronavirus crisis in country. Till now even when the country sees record daily infections and deaths, the government has failed to break the protest by farmers.



India is facing unprecedented surge in Coronavirus cases. At present, situation of India is worse, as the second wave of COVID-19 has strongly hit the country. The smoke from hundreds of dead being cremated every day and night has cast a shadow of dark clouds over India. Coronavirus cases are increasing at an alarming rate and every single day witness record high deaths and infections. These tragic circumstances in India came after the second wave of coronavirus, which was not taken seriously by the government as well as citizens of India. The incompetence of Indian government has brought the country to the brink where everyone's life is at risk. There was no plan and proper strategy by Indian government to control this catastrophic disease. Moreover, the government failed in implementing standard procedures and safety protocols to control the spread of disease.

The situation is so critical that international aid is being flowing into country. Country is facing extreme shortages of oxygen cylinders, medicines, and ICU beds. Hospitals in India have become hotbeds of disease. Thousands died for want of ventilators, oxygen cylinders and other medicines. Death rate is mounting and there are no beds remaining for the Patients in hospitals, which is causing massive anxiety to citizens along with that severe deficiency of medical oxygen has left a lot many people gasping for their final breaths in hospitals and now even the people are dying on footpaths. All this indicates the mismanagement and futility of Indian government in fight against this deadly wave of coronavirus.

Despite the surge of coronavirus throughout the country, Indian government did not imposed restrictions to stop the spread of coronavirus. Thousands and millions of citizens of India, largely unmasked attended religious festival "KumbhMela". Tens of millions of Hindu pilgrims congregated to bathe in their sacred rivers for the KumbhMela by trampling underfoot the safety protocols to contain spread of coronavirus. Now the second wave of corona is ripping through every state of India and there are desperate cries for help from every corner of the country.

Moreover, election rallies also helped in spread of the virus. Despite the surge of coronavirus cases in country, election-related activities, campaign rallies and voting continued in some states of India. The campaigns and political rallies involved large crowds with minimal or no social distancing and most of the crowd was not wearing mask. The ruling Modi's Hindu nationalistic party BJP has made sure during the elections campaign that their rallies should be bigger than any other political party. Albeit, the severity of second wave of coronavirus is proof that the politicians only cared about elections to win them at any cost no matter what happens to citizens. The politics in India endangered life of every citizen and now people seem helpless and hopeless.

Indian authorities kept on denying the reality. In response to unprecedented surge of coronavirus cases in country, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah said that there was no correlation between the rising number of coronavirus infections and the election campaign since "cases surged in states where there were no elections." Indian government kept on denying the facts and blamed others rather than accepting its own mistake. Despite the warning signs of next wave of coronavirus, Indian government did not make it sure to implement social distancing and lockdown measures were temporary and not effective.

Critics have criticised Indian Prime Minister Modi for handling of the crisis. Indian government kept on denying the reality and is censoring criticism on social media platforms. The government is ordering social media sites to block posts that criticize management of the nationwide public health crisis due to coronavirus pandemic. According to official figures, the virus has claimed more than 225,699 lives so far in India and many deaths have been gone unreported. In fact, the original numbers are much higher than this. Crisis management in India today is probably one of the worst in the world however, BJP government till now believes that pumping money into election rallies and pandering to their usual brand of religious politics can bring more success than saving lives of people. Undoubtedly, every passing day made it clear that BJP government has failed and today the catastrophic surge of coronavirus in India is just the result of mismanagement of government.

Federal along with the central government, both seemed least interested in making proper strategy to control the spread of coronavirus. There was lack of planning by government and bumbling disarray. Hardly, now any of the government official is taking responsibility but the people need to hold the government accountable because today gross administrative negligence has destroyed the country. Today, the immediate priority in India is to save lives of as many people as possible however, now it seems crucial in vaccinating the whole country. India, which is one of the biggest vaccine producer but it does not have enough doses to protect its own citizens. Less than 2 percent of its 940 million adults have been fully vaccinated. India has so far donated 8 million doses and sold nearly 52 million doses to a total of 75 countries.

The world second most populated country is now struggling to control the second wave of coronavirus. There is a sense of abandonment in the country and people being left to fend their own selves. The virus is surging in whole India however; its outbreak also poses a great danger for the world as well. This could not be denied that the current situation of India is just a reminder for the world that none is safe from the virus until everyone is safe.

Bangladesh - Pakistan's National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's 122nd birthday

INSIDE STORY

By Afshain Afzal

DHAKA, 25 May 2021, (TON): The 122nd birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam is being observed today in the country in a befitting manner. He was great Pakistan movement leader and due to his services Pakistan printed stamps in his honour in 1968 to highlight the poet's role as a fighter for freedom for the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. He was a "Muslim nationalist" who had worked to promote the culture and integrity of Pakistan on the basis of Islamic traditions and heritage.

Nazrul Islam, a Bengali literary legend used both new Arabic and Urdu words and succeeded in creating a wonderful poetic rhythm. His used Bengali and non-Bengali words merged into a phonic synthesis. Nazrul Islam wrote and composed music for nearly 3000 songs, collectively known as Nazrul Geeti (Nazrul songs) that still live in the hearts of the Bengali and Pakistani masses. He also wrote several novels, short stories. His works reveals Muslim renaissance, love and the awakening of the common man. In his songs, poems and articles Nazrul Islam inspired Muslims to rise up and fight for freedom against colonial rule by the British in India. His writings roused anger of the British government that proscribed his works on various occasions as well as twice sentenced him to rigorous imprisonment. Nazrul Islam also yearned and inspired peasants and workers against exploiters to establish their own rights. In his long poem 'Samyavad' (Equality) he speaks

for his love of poor and deprived classes and demands for a Islamic society free of exploitation and oppression. Enthused with Islamic ideology Nazrul Islam tried to remove divisions in society on account of differences in religions and sects.

On 26 March, 1971 the Constituent Assembly was declared as the supreme and sovereign authority of Bangladesh. The Assembly appointed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the President of Bangladesh, and Tajuddin Ahmad, the General Secretary

of the Awami League as the Prime Minister. In Mujib's absence, Nazrul Islam as senior leader of the Awami League he served as Acting President.

The cultural affairs ministry, Dhaka University and cultural organisation "Mukto Asar" have taken up programmes to celebrate the birth anniversary of the national poet on a limited scale due to the pandemic.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages yesterday paid rich tributes to the memory of the poet on the occasion of his birth anniversary. Bangladesh State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid will place a floral wreath at Nazrul's mazar on the Dhaka University.

The Orient News and Strategic & Public Policy Research Institute, Islamabad would highlight on services of great poet Kazi Nazrul Islam here in Islamabad.

Nazrul was born in Churulia near Asansol of West Bengal's Burdwan district.

He was the poet of rebellion against injustice and taboos, known for his rabid criticism of imperialism, social and religious taboos, Nazrul explored the themes of love, romance and devotion also.

After Bangladesh's independence, Nazrul Islam was declared the national poet and he was brought to Dhaka from Kolkata. The poet died in Dhaka in 1976. He was buried beside the central mosque of Dhaka University. Although Nazrul Islam is national poet of Bangladesh but he is equally loved and admired in Pakistan. No doubt, he was great friend of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and wrote a poem on him and will always remembered a top leader of Pakistan movement.

Kazi Nazrul Islam's



Bidrohi (The Rebel)

I am the unutterable grief,
I am the trembling first touch of the virgin,
I am the throbbing tenderness of her first stolen kiss.
I am the fleeting glance of the veiled beloved,
I am her constant surreptitious gaze...

I am the burning volcano in the bosom of the earth,
I am the wildfire of the woods,
I am Hell's mad terrific sea of wrath!
I ride on the wings of lightning with joy and profundity,
I scatter misery and fear all around,
I bring earthquakes on this world! "(8th stanza)"

I am the rebel eternal,
I raise my head beyond this world,
High, ever erect and alone!

– Translation by Kabir Choudhary



Nepal Facing Economic Cataclysm, Political Instability and Covid-19

OPINION

By TON Research Section

Nepal reeling from deadly second wave of coronavirus. Like neighboring India, Himalayan nation is also facing unprecedented surge in Coronavirus cases. The porous border between the two countries has contributed to the skyrocketing coronavirus cases. Coronavirus patients are increasing at an alarming rate and every single day witness record high deaths and infections. Nepal's main cities are in complete lockdown. The countries neglected health care system is facing collapse as the COVID-19 infections and deaths are new highs at the time.

According to the health Ministry of Nepal the situation is unmanageable. The Health Ministry spokesperson Jageshwor Gautam told media that entire health system has been overwhelmed due to the spiraling case numbers. "The situation is becoming precarious day by day. It may go out of

forest and dumped dead pigs in at least at 13 different place to set on fire. However, the fire spread quickly and engulf whole forest in different areas with gaps, forcing the COVID-19 positive tribals to flee to Nepal and other countries.

If we probe the reason behind the surge, Nepal shares 1,800-km-long open border with India, where the COVID-19 tally exceeded 22 Million. The porous border of Nepal with India is the major cause of spread of coronavirus. Town and villages near the Indian border have been badly hit due to health emergency and the number of people who need medical treatment are increasing rapidly. New COVID-19 wave in Nepal is linked with what is happening in India. In addition to the reason stated above, hundreds and thousands of Nepali citizens attended religious festival "KumbhMela" in India, which is major contributing factor to the sudden spike in cases in Nepal. According to the local media report, over 50,000 Nepali pilgrims participated in the event. Now the Nepali citizens are returning

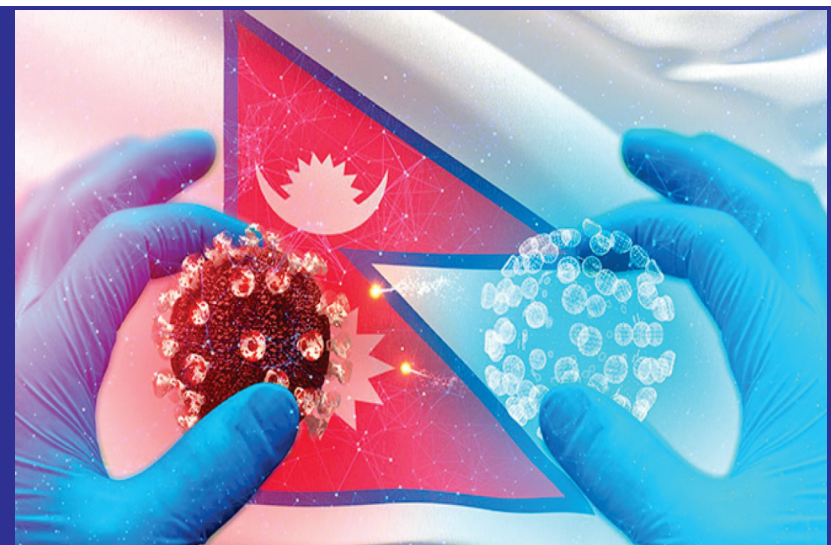
statement on April 30th, saying the hospitals were running out of beds and there was not an adequate supply of oxygen. Nepal is now recording 57 times as many cases as a month ago and the percentage of the people tested positive is about 45%, which was around 25% two weeks ago. According to an official COVID response plan, Nepal has only 1,595 ICU beds and 480 ventilators for its almost 30 million people and only 0.7 doctors per 100,000 in the Country. With the surging cases of coronavirus patients Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is seek help from other nations.

Political crisis is also looming in the country, along with that economic crisis and now pandemic rattles Nepal. Infrastructure development has been badly impacted, stalling hydropower, road, irrigation and airports development due to the crisis face by the country. Political instability and weak governance is hindering the development in country. The current disagreements between the political parties, the bitter power struggle, and government corruption

The decline in tourism due to nationwide lockdown has hit 2 million Nepali's who are depended on the tourist sector. Earlier in 2020, the country suspended all expeditions to 30 peaks and Everest. The capital expenditure of the country fell to 46.7% last year. Undoubtedly, the tourism sector of country is suffering and will suffer immensely in the near future due to the current situation and many people will either lose their job or the economic crisis will make them go bankrupt.

Nepal economy is heavily dependent on remittance inflow and at least 4 million Nepali nationals are working abroad. The pandemic has effected foreign employment, leaving thousands jobless and due to which the foreign remittance would go downwards. Moreover, many people employed in Nepal face layoffs. Furthermore, Nepal's economy is also effected through international trade. Export and import of the country have also gone down by half. Imports slumped to Rs58 billion by March 2020.

World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka Faris Hadad-Zervos stated, "The economic consequences of the pandemic and impact on livelihoods across Nepal is expected to be the most acute for informal workers or those without social security or assistance, who are more at risk of falling into extreme poverty."



control soon if we don't follow safety protocols," Gautam warned. The fact cannot be denied that evidences reflect the COVID spread in Mizoram due Indian Military protected and funded pig farms to settle refugee tribes all along Bangladesh and Nepal to provoke political unrest in Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal. At least four witnesses at two different villages claims that Indian Army and Assam Rifles personnel were burning corpse of thousands of dead pigs to control spread of African Swine Fever and COVID. Accordingly, they gathered dried fallen trunks of trees from the

home due to which the Coronavirus cases are increasing at an alarming rate in the country.

Hospitals in Nepal are overflowing with coronavirus patients and country is facing extreme shortages of oxygen cylinders, medicines, ICU beds and other health equipment's. Due to the lack of beds in hospital, the patients are being treated in open space in different parts of the country. Situation is getting so complicated that Nepal has called for international help. Earlier, the health ministry has issued a

scandals have undermined development in the country. Last year, the internal rift led to the parliamentary dissolution.

The outbreak of Covid-19 has become a global apprehension because it has not only remained a health issue but has also become an economic catastrophe. Nepal's economy is likely to see economic cataclysm due to the pandemic. Where the world tourism industry is suffering due to the restrictions on tourist movement, Nepal also faces spillover effect on its tourism sector which used to bring the country \$800million a year.

The current priority of the government should be to take corrective measures in fight against the pandemic. Albeit, second wave of coronavirus has created a bleak situation in the country. Under the effect of longest lockdown and unprecedented surge of coronavirus cases in Nepal, the economy of the country has been pushed back years. Due to the economic crisis and increasing number of corona patients, uncertainty prevails that how the economy will recover. However, a lot depends on the situation in coming days.

Suppressed Press freedom in Jammu and Kashmir by India

OPINION

By TON Research Section

In every democratic society, freedom of Press is fundamental. Freedom of expression and opinion is not only a privilege of journalists and is not just prerogative to a specific group of people but it's a universal human right. However, journalists exercise this right of free speech by disseminating the factual news to the world. Every year, 3rd May is celebrated as a day for the fundamental principles of press freedom to support media which are targets for the restraint or abolition of press freedom. World Press Freedom Day also echoes of many issues of press freedom and professional ethics. This day is also a day of remembering those journalists who lost their lives to fulfil their commitments of their profession.

Where this day is a reminder for governments around the globe to respect the rights of journalists and their commitment to press freedom, India is completely doing inverse in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Media is a platform from where a number of voices are heard throughout the world but Indian hegemonic role in Jammu and Kashmir has done all to curb the rights of press. Journalists in their day to day work exercise their right to freedom of speech and expression but are restrained in IIOJK by Indian forces to use this right. Media, which is known as the watchdog of society has been treated worst in occupied territory by Indian forces. BJP regime has continued threatening media platforms and journalists in IIOJK. Journalists are subject to a wide range of restrictions which deter freedom of expression in the valley.

After India revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and put it on the same footing as the rest of India, it faced extreme information blackout. India imposed restrictions on journalists, media houses and many newspaper publications were banned. Indian police raided media houses and printing presses were forced to close. Media is an eye-opener of society but this eye-opener is forced by India in occupied territory to shut down and if operating, will show the world what they want but not the real facts from the ground. Media and journalists in Jammu and Kashmir have been facing continuous threats and restrictions only because true face of India will be visible to the world

and the veil on the face of India will be removed.

There are number of journalists who have been the targets of Indian troops. Among these were a freelance French journalist, Comiti Paul Edward, who was arrested by Indian police when he was making video of pellet victims in Srinagar city on International Human Rights Day (10 December) in 2017. Paul Comiti uncovered the real face of India and

right to freedom of speech and expression for an ordinary citizen shares the same status as the freedom of the press but unfortunately today in Kashmir, where constitution of India is applicable, has neither press freedom nor an ordinary citizen is allowed to freely express their opinion. Media, which is considered to be the forth pillar of democracy and freedom of press is implicit under Article 19(1)(a) of Constitution of India but today freedom

respect that he had during his life and did not surrendered to Indian brutalities and severe torture during detention.

Journalists have to face death threats, abductions, illegal detentions, manhandling and many more by Indian troops in the region. Outrage by Indian troops at the impunity has made the everyday work of press extremely hard and challenging. Many of the journalists have been detained, injured and tortured



showed to world the genocide of innocent Kashmiris by Indian forces in his documentary which was released in 2018. Similarly, on 31st July 2018 Annie Gowan, Bureau chief of The Washington Post for India was restricted by Indian authorities in a house and was not allowed to move in occupied territory for reporting. Harassment of Kashmiri journalist by Indian police has become almost regular along with that internet and social networking websites are also blocked. Three Kashmiri journalists GowharGeelani, Peerzada Ashiq and Massarat Zahra were taken to police station and retained under strict laws for their writings and social media posts in the last month alone.

According to the constitution of India, the

of press seems to be fading away in Indian democracy and merely left on papers.

Reporting the truth is not an easy task, journalists have to put their lives at stake in the pursuit of a story and especially in the region like Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS) about nineteen journalists have been being killed while performing their duties during the Kashmiris' ongoing liberation struggle since 1989. On March 2018, a very well-known journalist SahilMaqbool passed away in jail. He was wrongfully framed and kept behind bars only because of a senior police officer's one-upmanship. For several years, he highlighted killings of innocent Kashmiris by Indian forces. He did not make decision of giving up but died with same self-

by Indian Security forces for covering the truth.

Media will only be regarded as fourth pillar of democracy in India unless and until it is urgently remedied from the threats by Indian regime and its hegemonic policy towards Jammu and Kashmir. Journalists should be allowed to perform their professional duties without any restrictions in the occupied territory and only in this way the danger to future of democracy in India can crushed. To protect the freedom rights is not easy in current misleading and threatening atmosphere created by India in Jammu and Kashmir albeit, it can be defended through actual democratic means. The act of giving voice to the voiceless can be achieved through fair and democratic

Communication blackout in Jammu and Kashmir has also become one of the tactic of India to hide its own scary face and ground realities. In October 2020, the Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Estates Department locked and sealed offices of Kashmir News Service and The Kashmir Times in Srinagar. Unfortunately, truth and social responsibility of journalists and even ordinary citizens has become a causality of controlled media culture in Jammu and Kashmir. This controlled media culture resulted in spread of opinions of those elites who have forcibly taken away this valley from Kashmiris. In all the democratic countries, Freedom of press has always been cherished right and India is one of the world biggest democracies but today its democratic face of India seems nowhere.

COVID-19 crisis pushed middle class Indians into poverty

NEWS REPORT

By Research Section

India has continued COVID-19 surge is hitting record new high deaths and infections. The country has reported death toll 250,025 and infections to 22.7 million. With the increase in Coronavirus patients, the country is also witnessing decreased economic activity. India is one of those countries which is affected the most in the world by the pandemic. To contain the spread of coronavirus, Indian government implemented nationwide lockdown in March 2020, which continued till May 2020 and the lockdown which was imposed in March was extended many times. The restrictions due to COVID-19 halted economic activities which caused

the unprecedented surge of coronavirus cases only lower income class in the country will be affected.

Second wave of coronavirus pushed India's middle class toward poverty. The life of millions of middle-class Indian citizens is under threat. According to Pew Research center, in last year approximately 32 million people in India were driven into poverty due to the pandemic, accounting for a majority of the 54 million who slipped out of the middle class worldwide. A year into the pandemic, the numbers of those in the middle class has shrunk to 66 million, down a third from a pre-pandemic estimate of 99 million, the report added.

"The number of people who are poor in India (with incomes of \$2 or less a day) is estimated to have increased by 75 million because of the COVID-19 recession. This,

too, accounts for nearly 60% of the global increase in poverty," the study said.

On April 13, 2021 credit rating agency Moody's said the second wave of coronavirus infections and the measures to contain it can weaken the economic recovery in India. Undoubtedly, the healthy growth forecast of lower income class in India seems far away. The surge of COVID-19 is undoing the decades of progress and throwing millions of people into poverty. However, the BJP government of Modi has defended its handling of pandemic. The reckless policies of Indian government and disarray has thrown millions of citizens into poverty. Hardly, now any of the government official is taking responsibility. Lack of employment, fall in incomes is continuously shrinking middleclass.



hundreds and thousands of daily wage earners to lose their jobs.

Currently the country is struggling to contain coronavirus infections in the country which are rising at an alarming rate. Where the coronavirus cases continue to grow every passing day, the lockdowns and the pandemic took a toll on the economy. The growth prospects in the country is collapsing. Last year in May 2020, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced 20 trillion rupees (\$266 billion) in fiscal and monetary measures to support an economic fallout by a sweeping weeks-long lockdown to fight with coronavirus pandemic. However, according to economist this package was very less to stimulate growth and the recovery trajectory is predicted to be weak.

Second wave of coronavirus presents greater risks for growth of middle class Indian citizen. Due to spiked coronavirus cases, the imposed lockdown in country has decreased economic activity in the country. India's poor are bearing the burnt again just like they did in previous year. Poor citizens of India have not recovered from the lockdown imposed in the previous year and again due to

The failure and mismanagement of the Indian government has brought people to the brink where poor people life is at risk. Irony is that these poor people are those who cheered for Modi during elections. This time Modi government is unwilling to repeat last year's lockdown, which left millions of Indian citizens jobless. Today, the spike in coronavirus pandemic in India is not just mass human sufferings but complete government failure. India's arrival as a global power is pronounced ahead of time because the current situation in the country shows that Indian government is unable to handle the crisis. Recent challenges have brought to fore Indian government.

Water problems in most important town of Bhutan becomes severe

OPINION

Nima from Bhutan

Gelephu town is seen as one of the biggest cities in future, considering the advantage of vast plain area and a location that could be one of the most important entry and exit gate in Bhutan.

The commercial hub of Bhutan is located close to the Indian States of Assam and West Bengal. It would have access to the nearest seaport in Assam that would improve connectivity via waterways with Bangladesh.

However, 12,000 residents living in the town had been experiencing water problem for over a decade now. The situation is worse during the onset of summer and winter.

Water sources starts to dry during the start of winter.

In summer, the stream filled with mud and silt, disturbs filtration process at the water treatment plant, which is expected to reach water to over 80 percent of population in Gelephu.

The residents were drinking murky water that was released for washrooms and basic cleaning works for more than a week this month. As the days without clean drinking water got longer, the people were seen boiling water for drinking. They were also buying mineral water for more than a week.

A resident from Gelephu, Sangay, said that the town faced water problems every summer for a long time without a solution. Nothing is being done to improve the situation. We know the problem but we are not serious about it," he said.

He added that the children were more at risk. The businessman in the town spent most of his time fetching water while running a bakery in the town. "It's better to close the unit. We have complained to the Mayor office but nothing has come from them," said Sangay.

While the adults could see the water was not safe for drinking,

children living in the town were vulnerable to all sort of water borne disease if consumed. The most affect were families who couldn't afford to buy water for a long time.

A hotel owner in the town, Dorji Lhaden, said to the national newspaper, Kuensel that she had to boil water for drinking. "It's difficult to maintain cleanliness without a clean water supply. We couldn't even wash dishes with it," she said.

The most affected were hotels operating as facility quarantine. Few hotels get water only in the morning and evening.

The water treatment plant for the Mayor district was designed with a natural filtration concept and not for the surface recharge. The officials don't have the capacity to improvise the design.

Official concerned said that the flashflood in the last summer and the dredging activities using heavy machineries along the stream used as source for the treatment plant disturbed the seepage network.

The water reaching to the infiltration gallery is all murky and filled with silt. Treating the muddy water was risky to the treatment water, making it difficult for the treatment process to complete.

The residents in the town should wait until the monsoon subsides and the water become clearer with less sediment.

The problem arises when the town is faced with the challenges of drying water at other sources, which the administration heavily depended for water in dry season.

The county located close to the mayor district also shared concerned with the water becoming more exhaustive job for the people and local administration. With the pandemic requiring practicing good hygiene, officials worry water shortages made the people more vulnerable.



India's abysmal healthcare structure and Modi government's \$2.8bn Central Vista project

OPINION

By TON Research Section

India is facing unprecedented surge in Corona virus cases. Situation in India is so critical that International aid is flowed into the country. During the tragic circumstances in country when everything has come to standstill point, Central Vista redevelopment Project undertaken by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is underway in full swing. At the time, when second wave of corona virus is ripping through every state of India and there are desperate cries for help from every corner of the country, people are dying everywhere and almost whole of the country is in lockdown, Modi government is busy in Central Vista redevelopment project. The \$2.8bn Central Vista Redevelopment Project will completely revamp power corridor in capital, New Delhi. The construction of a new triangular-shaped Parliament building, new residence for Prime Minister and President, along with that 10 other building blocks in the heart of India's capital will be constructed to accommodate government offices as part of the Central Secretariat Project.

The redevelopment project is spread over an area of 3.2km starting from the Indian gate, known as Lutyen's Delhi to Presidential residence "RashtrapatiBhavan" at Raisina Hills. Many buildings will be raised for the project completion. Earlier in 2020, the Supreme Court of India halted the construction activities on the project because of the concern over violation of environmental norms and possible destruction of heritage structures but after that Supreme Court of India allowed the central vista project to go ahead.

Today, the crisis management in the country is worst in the world. India's health crisis management has been uncovered after the unprecedented surge of corona virus. BJP government is not paying any heed towards what is happening in the country along with that what is the condition of health sector in country. On one hand India is getting aid from countries across the world to handle health crisis due to surge of corona virus but on the other hand Modi is spending multi-crore on central vista project. Severely inadequate funds and health budget, lack of check and balances of healthcare regulatory system all these played a major role in the abysmal health of citizens. India spend merely 1.26% of its total gross domestic product (GDP) on healthcare which is one of the lowest public healthcare budget in the world.

In wake of the raging corona virus pandemic in the country, where the people are struggling to get oxygen, vaccine, hospital beds and other medicines for the treatment, government is constructing new buildings and luxury houses for their self's. Many deaths in the country occurred because government failed to ensure oxygen supply. Hospitals in India has left COVID patients orphaned. Despite being one of the largest vaccine producer in the world, India is facing vaccines shortages. Indian government gave priority to export the vaccine rather than focusing on it domestic use. India has partially or fully vaccinated less than 12% of its total population. Less than 2 percent of citizens are



fully vaccinated and less than 9 percent have received their first shot of vaccine. Indian government seems to be busy in making money by exporting vaccines rather than saving its own citizens.

Modi government has been criticized throughout the country for \$2.8bn Redevelopment Project amid the surge of COVID-19 in country. India's 12 opposition leaders including Chief Minister West Bengal Mamta Banerjee and president of Congress party Sonia Gandhi wrote a letter to the prime minister to ask him to stop the "Central Vista construction and use the money for oxygen and vaccines".

Many civil society groups and environmental organizations across the country also appealed to the BJP government to stop the "ambitious Central Vista Redevelopment Project", at least till the pandemic is over. A statement was issued by 65 organizations, urging the government to pause the project and divert all available resources towards the handling of the pandemic.

Surge of coronavirus pandemic raised so many questions about the healthcare system in India. The deplorable conditions of hospitals in the country shows the negligence of the government. Today, the immediate priority in India should be to save lives of as many people as possible but India's government priority seems to be different. There is a sense of abandonment in the country and people are being left alone to fend their own selves. The crisis in India today shows failure of healthcare infrastructure in the country. Public healthcare infrastructure shambles but the government is ignoring it and just concerned about Central vista redevelopment project, that it should be completed on time just before elections because Modi government believes that pumping money into this central vista project and election rallies can bring more success than saving lives of people.

Hundreds and thousands being cremated every day, dead bodies of COVID-19 victims floating in the river and dozens of bodies are buried along riverbanks, shows human catastrophe in India. Today, in India the crumbling public health care system needs more funding and increased budget to fix the tumbled down healthcare condition. Although, one cannot find fault in redevelopment project but the timing of the project and stubbornness of Indian government to continue it amid surging coronavirus cases in country is questionable. The gruesome situation of COVID-19 patients in India, gasping for their last breath due to lack of oxygen should be reminded to Indian government to make them realize that how much out-of-control public health situation is in the country. So, rather than focusing on project, government should save lives of its citizens.

OPINION

By TON Research Section

State Terrorism by Israel in Palestinian territory

Recent attacks of Israel on Palestine have proved once again that Israel is terror state and it is sustaining itself on the blood of Palestinians. Earlier on May 16th, deadly airstrikes and bombings by Israeli forces turned homes of Palestinians to rubble. Israel said it had attacked a militant tunnel system which collapsed, bringing residential buildings down with it. It is happening because the long, outstanding and unresolved conflict between the two sides, that has been left to embitter. The heart of Middle East has become an open bloodletting wound for Muslims due to the immense violent hostilities by Israeli through rocket-firings and airstrikes that caused death of hundreds and thousands of Palestinians till now.

Albeit, the conflict has been dropped out of international captions in recent years but it does not mean that the problem has been ended. The problem is still there, and the hatred, bitterness of years, generations of trouble, and killing of innocent Palestinians is going unabated till yet.

For more than a century, Jews and Arabs have fought to be the owners and rulers of the land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. Israel has inflicted a series of death casualties on the Palestinians since it became independent in 1948. The conspiracy brewed when 100-years ago the Britain took control of the area known as Palestine when the Ottoman Empire was defeated in WW1. At that time the land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and Arab majority. The Britain played a key role, in establishing a "national home" in Palestine for Jewish people, the Jews arriving there grew, with many fleeing from persecution in Europe, after the Holocaust of WWII as Jews termed, it was their ancestral home.

In 1947, the UN voted for Palestine to be split into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem becoming an international city. In 1948, Jewish leaders declared the creation of the state of Israel as the only Jews state. Many Palestinians objected and a war followed. Troops from neighboring Arab countries invaded. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were forced out of their homes in what they call Al Nakba, or the "Catastrophe". By the time the fighting ended in a ceasefire, Israel took control of most of the territory. Jordan occupied land which became known as the West Bank, and Egypt occupied Gaza. Jerusalem was divided between Israeli forces in the West, and Jordanian forces in the East. There was never a real peace agreement, each side blamed the other which resulted in more wars and fighting in the decades which are still going on. In the war of 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as most of the Syrian Golan Heights, and Gaza and the Egyptian Sinai peninsula.

Most Palestinian refugees and their descendants live in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as in bordering Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Neither they nor their descendants have been allowed by Israel to return to their homes. Israel says this would overwhelm the country and threaten its existence as a Jewish state. Israeli forces seized East Jerusalem, during the Six Day War in 1967. Israel claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. The US is one of a handful of countries along with Britain to recognize Israel's claim at that time, to the whole of the city. In the past 50 years Israel has built illegal settlement in these areas which are obstacle in peace process.

Recent aggression by Israel in Gaza has been worst since

2014. It came after weeks of rising Israeli-Palestinian tension in East Jerusalem which culminated in clashes at a holy site revered by both Muslims and Jews. The fighting between Israel and Hamas was triggered on by days of Israeli police aggression at a holy hilltop compound in East Jerusalem. On the one side Israeli PM said that military operation against Hamas will continue "with full force", which depicts the war mania mindset of Israel towards Muslims of Palestine. whereas on the other side, Hamas which is the freedom fighter group that rules Gaza also fired rockets after warning Israel to withdraw from the site. However, the retaliatory air strikes by Hamas are also below the mark of humanity like Israels. Although, there are a number of issues which Israel and the Palestinians cannot agree on but one cannot deny that the war of land is just at the cost of blood of innocents. In an online meeting of the UN Security Council Secretary-General has urged all parties to end the "bloody violence."

The site is well-regarded by both Muslims, who call it the Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary), and Jews, for whom it is known as the Temple Mount. Hamas demanded Israel to

remove police from there and the nearby predominantly Arab district of Sheikh Jarrah, where Palestinian families face eviction by Jewish settlers. Since the start of Holy month of Ramadan from mid-April 2021, tensions escalated after the clashes between police and people of Palestine. The threatened eviction of some Palestinian families in East Jerusalem has also caused rising. The city has deep religious and national significance to both sides. Israel in effect annexed East Jerusalem in 1980 and considers the entire city its capital; though this is not duly accepted by the vast majority of other countries. Palestinians claim the eastern half of Jerusalem as the capital of a hoped-for state of their own.

There are a number of questions that are to be answered, albeit no one knows what should happen to Palestinian refugees, whether Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank will stay or will be removed, whether the two sides should share Jerusalem, and perhaps most mind boggling and tricky of all – whether a Palestinian state should be created alongside Israel. Peace talks have been taking place on and off for more than 25 years, but so far the



The role of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the UN for the solution of this issue is insufficient, disappointing. Only issuing press statements and lip service in solidarity of the plight of Palestine Muslims is not enough at all to end the atrocities of Israelis troops. The question remains still there that is the blood of Palestinians cheaper than water? It is a need of hour for Muslim nations to unite against the brutality of Israel. It is also litmus case for the collective conscience of international and European communities to work out it, for the durable and viable world peace. Another wise they will be considered as silent spectators of this gory incident.

War in Afghanistan: Escalating Violence and Pakistan's Peace efforts

OPINION

By TON Research Section

Apparently, the handful of combat mission of the United State of America in Afghanistan against the Taliban is finally coming to an end. After two decades of long war, the U.S. military begun its withdrawal from the country on 25 April. The peace deal signed with the Taliban in the final year of Trump's presidency and a declaration signed with Afghanistan government to start an intra-Afghan peace talks paved way for complete withdrawal of all American forces from Afghanistan by 1 May 2021. The main objective of the deal signed in 2020 was to negotiate a political road map for a new government, reduction in violence and a lasting cease-fire in Afghanistan between Afghan leaders, government and the Taliban. The Peace talks began in September, 2020 but the progress slowed down due to violence in the country.

Although the US did not honor 1st May deadline of troops' withdrawal that was assured by Washington in talks with the Taliban but reports confirm that now its remaining handful personnel's pull-out has begun. The US President Joe Biden announced that all troops will be gone by September 11. However, uncertainty still prevails in the country. There is increase in violence, Afghan government accuse the Taliban for the ongoing violence in country but neither Taliban have ever accepted responsibility of violence or deadly attacks nor they are behind it. Albeit, many factors are at play in the ongoing violence in Afghanistan and the result of civil war that lasts from 22 years, in which rivals carry out these acts to defame Taliban. It is also noteworthy that after the signing of peace deal and from the beginning of negotiations, the attacks and violence has been increased to fail the peace talks. However, it is



the attacks during this period. On 8th May, the explosions outside a school in the Afghan capital Kabul killed 30 people and wounded dozens other which official figures put as 85 people killed and over 150 wounded.

Recently, amid the surge in violence and withdrawal of foreign troops, Pakistan's Army Chief General QamarJavedBajwa visited Afghanistan to meet the top leadership of Afghanistan. He carried out one to one meeting with Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation Chairman Abdullah Abdullah and after the talks Abdullah Abdullah confirmed that General QamarBajwa assured him of Pakistan support for an inclusive power-sharing arrangement and elections as a

facilitating the US military invasion in Afghanistan. Pakistan was also long been blamed for protecting Taliban leaders but in the recent years the US along with Western Powers have hailed Pakistan's effort to bring the Taliban on table with the US and Afghan government for peace process.

Pakistan has been playing a crucial role to facilitate regional and international peace efforts in Afghanistan. However, the progress in the intra-Afghan dialogue to settle the differences has been stalled so far. Where Pakistan played a key role in Afghan peace negotiations on the other side, the main ally of the US, India never backed its efforts to reach peace agreement with the Taliban and disagreed in accepting the Taliban as political



Recently, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said in a statement "No sir, we do not intend to allow boots on the ground and no bases are being transferred to Pakistan,"

certain that those players who do not want the US troops' withdrawal and the return of Taliban as mainstream political entity in the country, are all behind these attacks. Reality can't be buried that if the Taliban returns, they can be one of the strongest political force in Afghanistan.

The US and NATO troops' withdrawal has led to a surge in fighting between Afghan security forces and the Taliban. Afghan security forces have also increased attacks on the Taliban. On the other side, there is increase in terrorist activities including explosions and attacks that are just targeting civilians. Nonetheless, the conflict between the government, Afghan security forces and the Taliban results in civilian casualties and it cause loss to country. According to the Interior Ministry of Afghanistan 255 civilians have been killed during the month of Ramadan (April 13 to May 12). The ministry said that 500 more civilians were wounded in

right of Afghans to self-determination. General QamarBajwa also met President Ashraf Ghani and offered Islamabad's support for the Afghanistan peace process, amid growing violence with US withdraws its troops. General QamarBajwa was accompanied by British Chief of Defence Staff General Nicholas Patrick Carter and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) head Lieutenant General Faiz Hamid.

Pakistan is being pressurized to play its due role in counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, however, Pakistan has ruled out of any possibility to provide its military bases to the US for the same after the troop withdrawal. US President Biden administration has, however, acknowledged in talks with the neighboring countries of Afghanistan to examine where it can reposition troops for operations against groups like Al-Qaida in future.

In the past, Pakistan's military bases played a key role in

actor. Since India want to make gains from the battlefield, its intelligence has long been involved in proxy war to destabilize Afghanistan along with Pakistan. Undoubtedly, India's core objective is to undermine peace efforts in the region and to minimize Pakistan's influence therefore, it never wants to see a stable and battle-free Afghanistan.

Undoubtedly, there are few actors who don't want the peace process to continue and a sustainable solution to solve the Afghan issue permanently. The US has also concluded that the war could not be won militarily but in fact the US and NATO troops have, in fact repositioned outside Afghanistan. The need of hour is to end the surge of violence in Afghanistan because this war is only at the cost of blood of innocent citizens as well as peace and development of Afghanistan. Afghan government and the Taliban need to sit together to hammer out their differences so that peace can prevail in the war-torn country and peace in won.

India's COVID-19 crisis takes a bigger hit to global Shipping industry

OPINION

By TON Research Section

As the markets are increasingly globalized, trade and shipping industry has also soared. Since the rise of intercontinental air travel, sea travel has become important around the world as a mean of transportation. Albeit, from the last two years COVID-19 has shaken international trade and hardly hit the global shipping industry. Since the start of pandemic, potential repercussions for international trade became obvious. People across the globe are facing immense challenges and sufferings due to the pandemic. COVID-19 has spurred a number of obstacles for global trade and shipping industry.

Shipping is the life blood of global economy. More than 50,000 merchant ships are trading internationally. The world fleet, which is registered in more than 150 nations is crewed by millions of seafarers. International shipping industry relies greatly on seafarers and India is one of the biggest provider of seafarers for the shipping industry. However, recently India has been affected the most by the coronavirus pandemic. The second wave of COVID-19 has strongly hit the country. Coronavirus cases are increasing at an alarming rate and every single day witness record high deaths and infections. India's huge wave of coronavirus pandemic has also strongly hit the international



and delays in vessels offloading create supply chain bottlenecks. In the month of May, India has 21.9 million tons of cargoes scheduled to arrive but due to the shortages of seafarers and labour many vessels could see delays in scheduled loadings and discharge. Moreover, according to the Container Availability Index (CAx) data, the equipment

administration, the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), the number of Indian seafarers employed globally has exceeded 150,000 in 2018. According to the DGS, at the end of 2017, India had 154,349 seafarers employed on merchant ships, compared to 143,940 in 2016 but now the numbers of seafarers from India, serving on international trading merchant ships has decreased.

Recently, a number of seaports are closing their doors for thousands of seafarers to and from India. Many companies are tapping seafarers from other countries. Thousands of seafarers across India who are unable to get out of the country because of COVID-19 that sparked travel curbs and restrictions on Indian crews. Many shipping authorities have advised Indian crew not to sign off from the vessel until the COVID-19 situation improves. Earlier, the Wilhelmsen Ship Management, a crew provider said that Zhoushan in China has banned the entry of ships or crew that have visited India or Bangladesh in the past three months. Industry executives also added that many crew members coming from India are tested positive for COVID-19. Port authority of South Africa also said that a vessel arrived in Durban from India was quarantined in which 14 Filipino crew tested positive for Covid-19. Last year, almost 400,000 seafarers were stranded at sea beyond their contract length because of the pandemic.

An estimated 240,000 Indian seafarers were supposed to receive Indian-made vaccines, from May 1st but the shortage of stock has postponed the vaccination. India is facing extreme shortages of medicines, oxygen cylinders and vaccines. It seems crucial in vaccinating the whole country. India, is one of the biggest vaccine producer but now it does not have enough doses to protect its own citizens because India has donated 8 million doses and sold almost 52 million doses to other countries.

India's COVID-19 crisis take a bigger hit to global Shipping industry which will cause difficulties for seafarers. The Global maritime trade also lost momentum due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, which has drastically changed the global environment and the recovery is still uncertain. Notwithstanding the challenges experienced due to the pandemic, coordinated efforts are needed to recover from the crisis.

trade and shipping industry.

Where, maritime transport is the backbone of globalized trade and 80 percent of goods trade is carried by sea but on the other hand due to the coronavirus pandemic maritime port traffic has slowed down. In the start of 2020, port ship traffic was down by more than 10 percent on the same period in 2019 and in the second half of May 2020, global port calls had fallen to less than 80 percent. UNCTAD estimates in its Review of Maritime Transport 2020 that Global maritime trade plunge by 4.1% in 2020 due to the unprecedented disruption caused by COVID-19.

India's unprecedented surge in coronavirus cases hits the work at ports, which also cause the slowdown of global trade. Due to explosive outbreak of COVID-19, global trade and shipping industry has witnessed disruptions. Slow shipment

shortages are also causing increase in container prices at major Indian ports.

The changing circumstances of global market affects the shipping industry. Logistic chain of shipping company suffers when it does not adapt to global industry trends but now due to coronavirus pandemic, everything has slowed down and Indian shipping industry has been hit hard by the pandemic. Although, the divergent trade flow and shipping industry which has gone down during COVID-19 outbreak in India has much to do with the policies of Indian government to combat it. Drastically reducing employment in shipping industry due to surge of coronavirus pandemic has caused difficulties for seafarers in India. Total of seafarers serving on internationally trading merchant ships are estimated at 1,647,500 seafarers and according to India's maritime

The empty rhetoric of normalizing Bangladesh, Israel Relations and Gaza crisis



NEWS REPORT

By TON Research Section

Bangladesh's refusal to recognize Israel is a stance that has never been changed since the independence of the country and this stance does not seem to be changing in the near future as well. Albeit, Israel was the first country to recognize Bangladesh after its partition from Pakistan following nine months long liberation war but the government of Bangladesh officially rejected the Israeli recognition. Bangladesh does not maintain diplomatic ties with Israel moreover, Bangladesh also maintains trade ban to Israel.

Bangladesh is one of those countries, who does not accept Israel passport and ban its citizens from travelling to the country. However recently, Bangladesh announced dropping of words "Except Israel" from Bangladeshi e-passports, which caused confusion regarding the recognition of Israel. Earlier, Bangladesh passport had a clause written on them that "This Passport is valid for all countries of the world except Israel" but the new passport issued by the government of Bangladesh does not bear this text anymore. Rumors about the removal of travel ban were emerged, which was a sudden shock to Bangladeshis and most significantly at the times when Palestine is gripped by brutality, terror and butchery of innocents at the hands of Israel.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry's deputy director general for Asia and the Pacific, Gilad Cohen tweeted that it was as "a welcome step" and called on Dhaka to "move forward and establish diplomatic ties with Israel," which caused confusions. Israel tried to normalize its relationship with Bangladesh but this time again efforts were fruitless. Senior officials from Bangladesh quickly denied the plans and clarified the decision of removing the text from passport. Bangladesh made it clear that it has only dropped the clause from passport to maintain international standards of the document and there is no change in a decade long policy and keeps the travel ban to Israel.

Earlier in 2004, a journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury was arrested and sent to jail after he

tried to attend a seminar in Tel Aviv on the invitation of Israeli NGO, International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace (IFLAC). He was charged with sedition, treason and blasphemy.

Israel is a country that is nuclear-armed and economically rich superpower which invaded Palestine with conspiracy and brutality and is supported by the US and other western powers but Bangladesh, including other Muslim nations does not recognize Israel because of its illegal occupation of Palestine. Recently, Bangladesh Foreign ministry reiterated its principled position concerning the two-state solution of the Palestine-Israel conflict in light of the UN resolutions recognizing pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. Several officials and foreign experts in Bangladesh also opposed the idea of establishing diplomatic ties with Israel. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina many times said that Israel's occupation of

Palestinian land is never acceptable and Bangladesh will continue its support to the Palestinians.

In the final year of Trump Presidency, Israel normalized its diplomatic ties with four Muslim countries which include North African state Sudan, Morocco and Gulf State UAE and Bahrain, also there were speculations that another Muslim-majority nation is going to formalize its relations with Israel nevertheless, it was just a conspiracy of Israel but not the truth. Although, Israel has been keeping a wary eye on Bangladesh ever since its creation but every time Bangladesh pushed back Israel and vehemently cleared its position. Nonetheless, it's the moral obligation of every Muslim nation to support Palestinian people and not to give Israel diplomatic flexibility unless and until the two state solution of Israel and Palestine.

There is no lingering speculation that Bangladesh is looking for diplomatic avenues to normalize ties with Israel but there is no doubt that Israel is and will continue to put efforts for improvement of its relations with other Muslim nations, after maintaining its diplomatic ties with North Africa and Gulf States. Israel will gain a lot by normalizing relations with Bangladesh but for Bangladesh, normalizing relations with Israel is in clash to supporting sovereign Palestinian state and it will hurt Palestinian cause. Despite the overt and covert actions of Israel, Bangladesh has not signaled a shift in its policy towards Israel. The empty rhetoric of Israel's recognition by Bangladesh, misrepresents grassroots opinion because a large portion about recognizing Israel has not much to do with government of Bangladesh but it has more to do with the sentiments of people who have historical obligations and pro-Palestine sentiments from the beginning.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen said, "We have taken decision to drop "Except Israel" from passport six months ago when we introduced e-passport. It is for standardization of our passport. But our foreign policy will remain the same towards Israel. We are not going to establish our ties with Israel. We support the struggle of the people of Palestine. We also support two-state solutions. So, our foreign policy will remain unchanged."

Is military takeover in Myanmar constitutional?

OPINION

By TON Research Section

Charged with spreading information that could cause unrest, as she declared that her National League for Democracy party would "exist as long as people support it", Aung San Suu Kyi, 75-year-old former leader, was arrested and booked to face a trial. Suu Kyi also faces two counts of violating the Natural Disaster Management Law for allegedly violating COVID-19 pandemic restrictions during the 2020 election campaign; illegally importing walkie-talkies that were for her bodyguards' use; and unlicensed use of the radios. Along with these she was facing five different charges which also includes the acceptance of bribes. The most serious charge, which another court is dealing, is that Suu Kyi breached Official Secrets Act, which carries a penalty of up to 14 years' imprisonment.

Wearing a pink face-mask, her hands in her lap, Aung San Suu Kyi appeared before the special court set up inside Naypyitaw's city council building. Alongside her were her two co-defendants, former President Win Myint and Myo Aung, the former Mayor of Naypyitaw, Myanmar's capital. Her previous court appearances have been by video link and what she claims was that she was not allowed to meet in person with any of her lawyers. Although the case is in the court, UN special envoy for Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener did not miss the opportunity to issue a statement from UN headquarters in New York, calling the military's attempt to ban the NLD as "unacceptable." The UN Security Council has called for the junta to free Aung San Suu Kyi and others imprisoned since the coup.

Suu Kyi's supporters say the proceedings are politically motivated and are meant to discredit her and legitimize the military's seizure of power. An American journalist, Danny Fenster, working for a Myanmar news magazine was detained at Yangon's airport as he was preparing to board a flight to Malaysia. According to Myanmar's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which is keeping a tally of arrests and deaths; almost 4,300 people are in detention, including 95 who have already been sentenced, 818 protesters and bystanders have been killed by security personnel since the coup. The junta has arrested about 80 journalists, roughly half of whom remain detained awaiting charges or trial. Junta chief Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing said in an interview with Hong Kong-based Phoenix Television that the death toll had been exaggerated and was actually about 300, and that 47 police had been killed and more than 200 injured.

Suu Kyi won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her non-violent resistance against the military rule and her struggle for the enforcement of democracy. She was kept her under house arrest for 15 years. The human rights organizations, international community and world political leadership consider her a ray of hope for people in search for justice. But once she became leader after winning the elections, international community was critical of her actions especially her response to a violent crackdown by security forces against the Arakan Army or Rakhine armed group in Myanmar as well as Rohingya Muslims. UN investigators determined that the violent campaign of arson, rape and murder was carried out with genocidal intent. But Suu Kyi has publicly rejected accusations that the military waged a genocidal campaign against the Rohingya.



The 2014 Amendment to the Defence Services Act, the commander in chief and his deputy must retire at the age of 65. Mark Farmaner, the director of the London-based advocacy group Burma Campaign UK said, "He has also used his position to ensure his family have lucrative businesses interests, which he won't be in a position to protect after retirement." The military chief may choose any of these three possible course of actions: voluntary retirement, enter politics, and or extend his tenure. In fact, Article 20(b) of the constitution says that the military has the right to administer all affairs of the armed forces independently. Moreover, the constitution also gives the National Defense and Security Council (NDSC) the power to propose and approve the military chief to the president who formally appoints. Myanmar's constitution enrich the military a permanent role for itself in the political system. It gets an un-elected quota of 25% of parliamentary seats and its chief appoints ministers of defence, interior and border affairs, ensuring a key stake in politics.

A 2017 there was a civil war which invited military crackdown against Arakan Army or Rakhine armed group and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, which drove Christians and Rohingya Muslims into neighbouring Bangladesh and other countries. In response, the United States imposed sanctions on Min Aung Hlaing and three other military leaders in 2019 and several court cases in various international courts, including the International Court of Justice, are going on. The UN investigators urged world leaders in 2019, to impose targeted financial sanctions on companies linked to the military. In February 2021, power was handed to General Min Aung Hlaing as it was alleged that Aung San Suu Kyi took law and order in her hand and she is responsible for the cause of violence in the country so according to article 40 (c) of the constitution the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Services had the right to take over and exercise State sovereign power if there arises a state of emergency that could cause disintegration of the Union, national solidarity and loss of sovereign power or in case of any violence.

Analysts are of the opinion that the political situation in Myanmar may be due to the personal ambitions of General Min Aung Hlaing, who was due to retire this year. But not only General Than Shwe, previous chief retired at age of 78 but new amendment in the constitution provides other options. Whatever, the case may be country's constitution and sacred for all the countries. No matter it is military or any other authority, the law has to be followed at all cost. Aung San Suu Kyi's case is being heard in the court in Naypyitaw's city council building along with co-defendants, former President Win Myint and Myo Aung. Let us hope that the case against these leaders are decided on merit and democracy is allowed to flourish in Myanmar.

Indian Farmers Protest entering into ninth Month

NEWS REPORT

By TON Research Section

The leader of farmers announced that on 21 April, a convoy of thousands of farmers, youth, and women from all over the state would again march towards Delhi under the leadership of union leaders Sukhdev Singh Kokri Kalan and Jhanda Singh Jethuke. He paid homage to the martyrs of JallianwalaBagh and said the Modi government was acting as a puppet of domestic and foreign corporate houses. The three law reforms have been made an ulcer for Indian Farmers which led them to conduct tractor rallies against the Indian Government from protest sites near Delhi borders to Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway. Senior BKU leader Rakesh Tikait has led several tractors' marches and rallies against the three agriculture laws amended by the Government of India.

Farmers feel inconvenient and highly disagree with the policies of Government because of the amendment in three bills, which the Government is unwilling to revert the bill. Remember that farmers are demanding the repeal of these three reforms — Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act.

Before, the market system was based on local markets and Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC), which were Government organized markets where government rules were applied, and farmers used to sell their products to companies whom Government only licensed. The APMC was the second option for the farmers if they did not get satisfactory local market prices. They moved towards APMC to get better prices. APMC is also known as Government operated markets which function in almost all of the states of India. Around 6500 government-operated markets in differ

ent states based on previous agriculture laws, and only government traders could purchase goods from farmers.

According to the new market system, the Government is removing its hold and taxes from the APMC, and those markets will behold by traders without the Government's concern, and the Government will hold the markets will be erased subsequently and slowly in the long term.

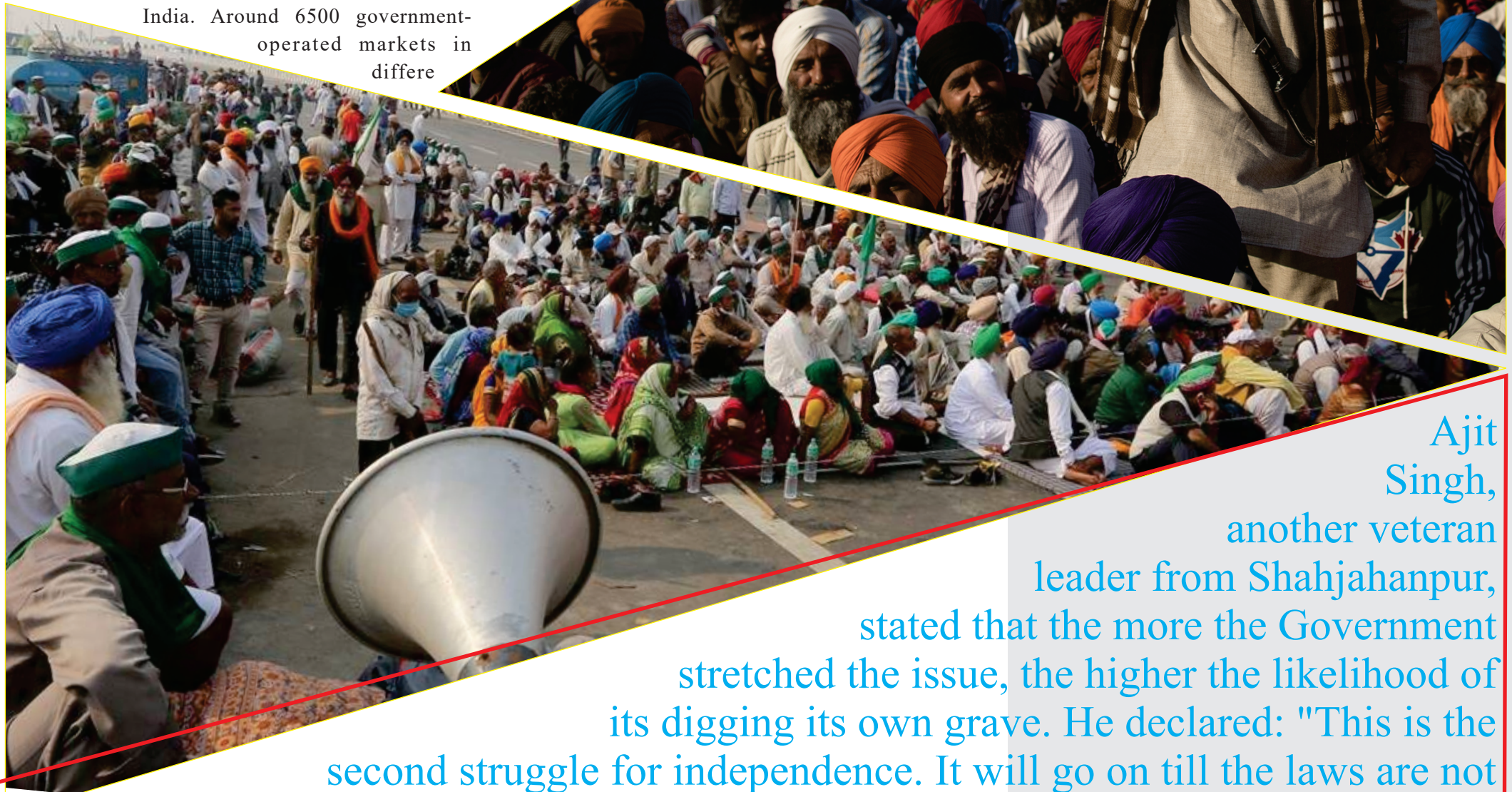
As Farmers Unions and the Central Ministers have gone through seven rounds of negotiations, the ministers sent by Government have not assured them to satisfy protesters and completely reject their objections.

The current challenge for the farmers is to keep the momentum and morale high. Rajvir Yadav, a BKU officer from U.P., at Ghazipur said that they were prepared for this. He explained: "We knew this was going to be a long haul that this Government would try to break us, tire us out and defame us. This Government is of a different mindset altogether, so we were prepared. We fail to understand why they are so stubborn. Can any BJP leader say that they won elections without the support of the BKU? The Government is under corporate pressure. They agreed to put the laws on hold for some months. Why would they say that if they felt there was something wrong with the laws? The corporate sector and fundamentalist are influencing the Government with a remote. They cannot mortgage our lives. We are not against the Government but the policies it has adopted. We supported this party before and helped them form Government on three occasions.

Ajit Singh, another veteran leader from Shahjahanpur, stated that the more the Government stretched the issue, the higher the likelihood of its digging its own grave.

e. He declared: "This is the second struggle for independence. It will go on till the laws are not withdrawn.

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for about 58% of India's workforce, and farmers have been arguing for years to get the minimum guaranteed prices increased. Farmers face a harsh climate of winter. Now they enter the warm weather of New Delhi. They have organized thousands of small tents for people to sleep in and find some shelter during the winter. Things like mosquito nets, water purifiers maintain people's well-being intact and physical health with the heat. Although the protestors gain the attention of International Media but their struggle and protest becoming more and more complex for the farmers. The protest will end up in the upcoming days, but the question is, more than 200 farmers were killed during agitation; who is responsible for the killings of innocent farmers?



Ajit Singh, another veteran leader from Shahjahanpur, stated that the more the Government stretched the issue, the higher the likelihood of its digging its own grave. He declared: "This is the second struggle for independence. It will go on till the laws are not

The power-sharing arrangement and legitimacy of Afghan government

INSIDE REPORT

By TON Research Section

The legitimacy and transparency of governance in Afghanistan is essential to stability in war torn country however, its fractured-political environment makes the system debilitated. Earlier, nationwide Presidential elections of 2019 declared the incumbent, Ashraf Ghani won with 50.6 percent of the vote, whereas, Abdullah Abdullah was announced as the runner-up with 39.5 percent of votes. Abdullah immediately challenged the result of elections and both sides claimed the authority to form next government moreover both held parallel inauguration ceremonies. Two men with powerful support bases, claiming the presidency created a challenge of power-sharing and left another election in crisis.

The political crisis in Afghanistan recorded several events since 2019 Presidential elections. Different groups tried to mediate between Ghani and Abdullah to resolve this political dispute. Abdullah stance was to nullify the election results and the post of Prime minister to be created but due to the growing internal and external pressure Abdullah backed down from this position and returned to the proposal offered by Ghani to him. The bottleneck in making a government, ended after the former US secretary of state, John Kerry, stepped in to broker a power-sharing deal, which paved the way for unity government. Abdullah submitted a new proposal which included a number of new institutions undoubtedly; this proposal was just to find a way round the power-sharing cabinet, which was rejected by Ghani before.

Power-sharing agreement "Tawafoq-nama-ye Siasi" (Political Agreement), was signed by Ghani and Abdullah on May 17th, 2020, which gave leadership to Abdullah of the peace process and the

The unrealistic goals of Afghan government will not let Afghanistan move towards stability and security unless Afghan citizens are given equal right to participate. There is need for bottom-led approach owned by Afghanis to accompany other senior politicians for better Afghanistan. Of these 18 names in the draft document of power-sharing agreement have been old tested and failed. At present, in Afghanistan there is a necessity of government that ought to be led by Afghan nationals because the failed strategies of same old seasoned politicians have just dominated the system of state. The elite-oriented distribution of power among parties has become a trend in Afghanistan and now this power-sharing arrangement will also be unable to deliver sustainable peace.

right to appoint half the cabinet. The agreement included a Supreme State Council (Shura-ye 'Ali-ye Dawlat) in Afghanistan, "comprising of political leaders and national personalities" which would be established to "advise the president and leadership of the government on crucial national issues, Afghanistan's relations with countries of the world, strengthening national unity, realization of social justice and government's structural reforms."

The agreement did not specifies the number of council members or who servers on it but government of Afghanistan prepared a draft document which include the names of 18 people as members of the Supreme State Council (14 men and 4 women). These 18 people include President Ashraf Ghani, the head of High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah, former president Hamid Karzai, former jihadi leader Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf, Hizb-e-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, former vice

president Mohammad Karim Khalili, former foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani, Fatima Gailani, Mohammad Mohaqiq, Marshal Abdul Rashid Dostum, Ata Mohammad Noor, Mohammad Sarwar Danish, Mir Rahman Rahmani, Fazel Hadi Muslimyar, Hasina Safi, Fawzia Koofi, and Habiba Sarabi.

The agreement allows President Ashraf Ghani to form a cabinet and fill other high level positions. Much of the conditions in agreement move around the sharing of government posts and special government protocol, along with that a number of new state institutions will be established. However, both the rival group of election 2019 were successful in getting a part of the pie. The political agreement signed last year between both the groups, established to ensure political consensus in the country has not been completed. The debates over structure and role of Supreme State Council still continue. This document has been criticized for not consulting many leaders among the list. However, the Presidential Palace said that the document is not final so far.

The 18 member list does not include any name of ordinary Afghans leaders who have been waiting from long for an inclusive government. There is a situation prevailing in the country in which political parties are losing support from ordinary Afghan citizens. However, today in Afghanistan a conducive environment with down to up approach is required so that the local people can get a sense of ownership and responsibility in their own country. They don't want any foreign interventions and support to some specific political candidates. Albeit, his cannot be denied that at present the reconciliation and reconstruction of political environment is not possible with just a group of persons who are busy in getting a slice of pie because the country has long been plagued by war and all these are just seasoned politicians who have been tested.



UN, NGOs pledged aid to millions of Afghans

NEWS STORY

INSIDE NEWS REPORT

KABUL, 26 May 2021, (TON): - The UN and NGOs humanitarian actors in Afghanistan made commitment to staying and delivering impartial and neutral assistance to millions of people in need. Ongoing clashes, spiraling food insecurity and the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in a near-doubling of people in need in the space of 12 months – up from 9.4 million in January 2020 to 18.4 million in January 2021, according to a statement. Humanitarian actors are deeply concerned by continued violence across the country characterized by

high levels of civilian casualties and almost 100,000 people internally displaced just this year, while intra-Afghan negotiations present the opportunity for a lasting peace. Increasing conflict and bureaucratic impediments have required humanitarian organizations to assess, mitigate and navigate the changing operational space. Humanitarian actors in Afghanistan request to parties to the conflict that protect civilians, aid workers and civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals in compliance with International Humanitarian Law. In 2021, the UN and humanitarian partners in Afghanistan require US \$1.3 billion to help 15.7 million people. Only \$166.8 million (13 per cent) of the funding has been received yet.



Pakistan wins WHO's award for anti-tobacco campaign



ISLAMABAD, 24 May, 2021, (TON): The World Health Organisation (WHO) regional office for the eastern Mediterranean has announced the World No Tobacco Day 2021 Award for Pakistan for its effective anti-tobacco campaign.

Former technical head of the Health Ministry's Tobacco Control Cell (TCC) and Focal Person for WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Dr Ziauddin Islam said the award had been given to Pakistan due to efforts made during the last decade said Dr Ziauddin Islam, Focal Person for WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the former technical head of the Health Ministry's Tobacco Control Cell (TCC).

Pakistan is being lauded for implementing the 'M' measures (monitoring of tobacco use policies) in the MPOWER package to the highest level.

The health ministry had been facing criticism over disbanding the TCC whereas a parliamentarian, who defended tobacco companies in parliamentary committee meetings, became a member of the policy board of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

According to a statement issued by the health ministry, the TCC is working better under the director general (health wing) since July 2020. It has been organising smoke-free

initiatives, acknowledged by WHO. Furthermore, it must be pointed out that NHS promulgated a statutory regulatory order (SRO), through which all types of tobacco advertising, promotions and sponsorship (TAPS) were banned on point of sale even on social media.

"Pakistan has grabbed the global award after the significant work on tobacco control through policy making as the country has set a target of reducing the number of persons consuming tobacco products by up to 30 per cent by 2025," the statement said, adding the country also successfully implemented the model of Tobacco-Smoke Free City project under which health authorities established monitoring cells on the district level to implement steps for reducing tobacco consumption.

According to the statement Pakistan has made 304 localities and parks smoke-free in 12 different districts and became the first country to declare smoke-free Public parks.

WHO was asked to nominate individuals or organisations from each of the six WHO regions for their accomplishments in controlling tobacco use.

The international award will be given to the Ministry of National Health Services (NHS) on 'World No Tobacco Day – Commit to Quit' which will be observed on May 31 across the globe.

Pakistan-Iran-Turkey Cargo train project - Hope for prosperity in the region

OPINION

By Zia-ur-Rehman

Three founder countries of Economic Cooperation Organization Pakistan, Iran and Turkey planned to start an economic train service between the capitals of three countries i.e Islamabad, Tehran and Istanbul. This train service was launched on Friday, 14 August 2009. Former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani inaugurated the service by driving train himself in Margalla Railway Station, Islamabad. It was a 6500 km rail line link Islamabad, Tehran and Istanbul. But it was cancelled in December 2011 due to logistical challenges.

Now, once again Pakistan has announced in March, 2021 to resume the service from Islamabad to Turkey via Iran after a gap of Nine years. Earlier, Pakistan made an official announced that Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) Freight Train will resume operations from 4 March, 2021. It will complete the one-side trip in 12 days, with capacity to move 750 MT of goods. This is a testament of friendship between the three countries". But unfortunately, due to some unavoidable reasons, the train service could not be restored two months after the announcement.

Because of its importance, the governments of the three countries should resume this service as soon as possible. It is very important project particularly for Pakistan because it is not limited to the trade activities of the three countries but it connects Pakistan Railway to the Central Asian Countries and with European countries through Turkey. In this way, Pakistan will have access to European markets. Each country takes steps to increase its exports and they need big markets to export their products. European markets are huge and every underdeveloped country wants to have access to them. Such these countries increase

their exports due to the large markets of European countries and thus earn substantial profits.

Pakistan should have access to European markets as much as possible. This Train service is one of the best ways for Pakistan to access European markets because Turkey is part of this project and a part of Turkey is in Europe, it is possible for Pakistan to reach Europe by train via Turkey. This route is also much cheaper than the sea route and saves time using this route.

Besides this, importance of this ITI Train project is also due to the fact that this will be associated Russia, China, Central Asia, Central East and South Asia. This will promote economic, industrial and trade activities in the region. Most of these countries have their own railway systems that need to be connected on the borders with each other. Pakistan's railway system is well connected with India as well as Iran and in the near future it is possible that China and Afghanistan railways will join Pakistan railway lines. Earlier, when the project was first launched in 2009, considering its importance, India and

Bangladesh requested Pakistan to include them in the train service to reach Central Asian states. So now they will want to join the project again. In this way, Pakistan will act as a bridge between South and Central Asia, which will be very beneficial for Pakistan.

The ITI train project is primarily a project of ECO countries, so all Central Asian countries, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which are members of the ECO, will soon join the railway service. Russia, the world's largest railway system, will be connected it through Central Asia. In this way, access to Western Europe will be possible through Turkey and Eastern Europe via Russia.

China ranks second in the world in economics while USA ranks first. Economists say that if the situation remains the same, China will be number one in 2025. Russia is currently second in defense and military, and China is third. With the cooperation of these largest economies, defense and military powers, Pakistan has a huge scope to increase its exports and stabilize its economy. Therefore, as a developing country, Pakistan should not miss out on this great opportunity to develop its economy. Pakistani officials should be active in restarting the project, as Turkey and Iran are ready to work with Pakistan on the project.



Pakistan is a very important country in the region as it is located in the middle of various important regions. China is located in the north of Pakistan, most of the South Asian and SAARC countries are located in its East and Central Asian countries are located in the West. The countries in the West of Pakistan are spread over a large area and all the countries are Muslim majority countries. All these countries are located in the same region and are connected to each other like a chain. There are deep religious and cultural ties between Pakistan and the people of these countries. If all these countries adopt a common strategy and cooperate with each other economically and defensively, they can become a great power. The Pakistan-Iran-Turkey train project will be the beginning, this will deepen relations between all countries. If the plan succeeds, the region will prosper.

The After-effects of COVID-19 on the World

OPINION

By TON Research Section

It is an established fact now, that the global pandemic of COVID-19 is an ever seen human health catastrophe across the world after world war 11; this crisis has severely affected the economy, education, industry, and development of mankind, killing thousands, rendering millions of the people jobless including the labors, beyond the world imagination. The ever-increasing food uncertainty, growing divergence, polarization, rising-falling mistrust of public institutions and leaders are the causes, ensuing from the pandemic.

The economic downgrading caused by the pandemic resulted in municipalities receiving down-to-earth lower tax revenues in different spheres like sales tax, hotel taxes, and income taxes. The civic sector is facing increased costs of daily life items besides, public health expenses associated with the current pandemic environment.

It is also an open truth that the world experienced unity and liberality between communities of the countries, and sectors during the pandemic as; the crisis has forced and obliged the world to tackle the gigantic task and challenge of controlling and curing the pandemic collectively. It means that collectively matters and can address a lot of great tragedies of the world. The dangers of COVID-19 which is still, looming on us, need too much cure before it eradicated forever.

In this way, the first step is to provide equitable access to diagnostics, vaccines, and treatments to the people of underdeveloped countries. The Access to COVID-19 tools (ACT) Accelerator and COVAX facility provides the best road access to ensure people everywhere in the world with the same opportunity available to benefit from the incredible medical breakthroughs against COVID-19 onward. This pandemic won't end anywhere if it isn't ended in the countries with low income because the possibility of human carriers is always there.

COVID-19 is "the worst humanitarian crisis year since the beginning of the United Nations," The numbers look dreadful and according to a UN

survey, a record 235 million people needed humanitarian assistance and protection, a near 40% increase from 2020, which was already the highest figure in decades. The worse, we are seeing crisis levels of hunger across large swaths of Africa and the Middle East.

In addition, the UN estimates that hardships resulting from COVID-19 will drive 13 million more girls to marry before the age of 18. What kind of message does that send to young girls everywhere? Even the abundant hospital-blue masks are bizarrely designed to fit a man's face, not a woman's — despite 70% of health care workers are women. Gender inequality is "the unfinished business of our time." An uphill task and challenge for humanity in the time to come.

Enough space should provide for fair and more inclusive opportunities to pay closer attention to intersectional inequalities that COVID-19 has highlighted. For example, LGBTQ people of color are more likely than white LGBTQ people to possess had their working hours cut during the pandemic — only one reminder of how the impacts of COVID-19 are complex if, you bear inequality in multiple ways.

Another area of mushrooming inequality is education, which should be the central equalizer. With classrooms going remote or shifting online, half of the world's population, lacking basic amenities, access to internet connection or computer, is put at an unfair disadvantage, one that will only worsen over time, if not tackled tactfully. According to the World Bank, 1.6 billion students were out of school due to the peak of the pandemic in April 2020. In low- and middle-income countries alone, 24 million children and youths may drop out or not have access to school in the current year of 2021. The school closures and disruptions caused by the pandemic excessively affected students of different colors. That's why we can't let COVID-19 to create a "vacuum of communication" among variant classes of people.

The Pandemic is becoming a source of vast ecological crisis as ecosystems are collapsing, biodiversity is disappearing, and oceans are acidifying. Even though there is a slowdown in



economic activity due to the pandemic. We cannot escape the cumulative effect of generations of unchecked human activity or even able to afford a return to our pre-pandemic emanation trajectory. The greater preparedness and cooperation against the next pandemic, or working together to tackle the climatic crisis, dismantle inequality and racism in all their maleficent forms, or building peace in order to people can achieve their dreams is obligatory and need of the hour for us as a world community.

A ray of hope has been raised for the emergence of multilateralism. We have done it before right at the end of the Second World War when nations, collapsed and come together to create the United Nations, with the U.S. at the head of the table. The world witnessed more than four decades ago to eradicate smallpox, and again to close the ozone hole. And again in 2015, all nations came together at the UN to sign on to the collective promise of the SDGs — and the Paris Agreement So, let's not give up our joint efforts in 2021 to free the world from all kinds of diseases including COVID-19 pandemics in bid to make it beautiful for all creatures of Almighty GOD. The perception and imagination are that in 2021 social movements, strong political will, financial necessity, and collective human responsibility altogether will give us the momentum to transform and change the world and bring about equalities for everyone living on the planet of earth.



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on the most susceptible and marginalized communities around the world including laborers along with poverty-stricken women and girls besides, people of every race, color, sect, and religion. According to the UN, the pandemic has led to the world's workers losing more than 10% of their income, or \$3.5 trillion in the first three quarters of 2020, compared with the same period in 2019. It is estimated that COVID-19 will push quite 71 million people into extreme poverty.

Pakistan calls for deployment of international protection force in Gaza



ISLAMABAD, 21 May, 2021 (TON): Speaking at UN General Assembly special meeting on Palestine Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Thursday Gaza has plunged in darkness, literally and metaphorically, while the only light is that of Israeli explosions.

"The General Assembly should call for concrete steps to protect the Palestinians. We should deploy an international protection force, as was called for in General Assembly Resolution ES-10/20 and as demanded by the Islamic Summit Conference on 18 May 2018," Qureshi said.

"If the Security Council cannot agree to send a protection force, a 'coalition of the willing' can be formed to provide at least civilian observers to monitor a cessation of the hostilities and supervise the provision of humanitarian help to the Palestinians," he suggested.

Qureshi said the failure of the United Nations Security Council to maintain peace and security in Gaza is "appalling."

The foreign minister stressed that the United Nations General Assembly, must then, assume its own responsibility and help the people of Palestine.

"We must not fail the Palestinian people at this critical juncture," he said.

"Those preventing the Council from doing so bear a heavy responsibility," the foreign minister said in reference to the repeated blocking by the United States of a statement calling for an end to the hostilities on the ground that such a move would interfere with the Biden administration's attempts to stop the fighting.

Qureshi also urged Israel be held accountable for its war crimes and asked the UN to activate the Human Rights Council, International Criminal Court, International Court of Justice, and other avenues to ensure this.

"Death echoes in every home in Gaza," he added in his speech.



"Israel's crimes against humanity should not escape accountability. There should be no impunity for violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and other human rights conventions," he said.

The 67th plenary meeting in New York was chaired by Volkan Bazakir, the Turkish diplomat who heads the UN General Assembly, was also attended by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and foreign ministers from such countries as Palestine, Turkey, Qatar, Jordan, Algeria, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia.

Israel continued to impose institutionalized discrimination against Palestinians living under its rule in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). It displaced hundreds of Palestinians in Israel and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The new wave of violence started on 6 May by Israel, when Palestinian protests began in Jerusalem over an anticipated decision of the Supreme Court of Israel on the eviction of six Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah.

Ceasefire between Israel and Hamas announced

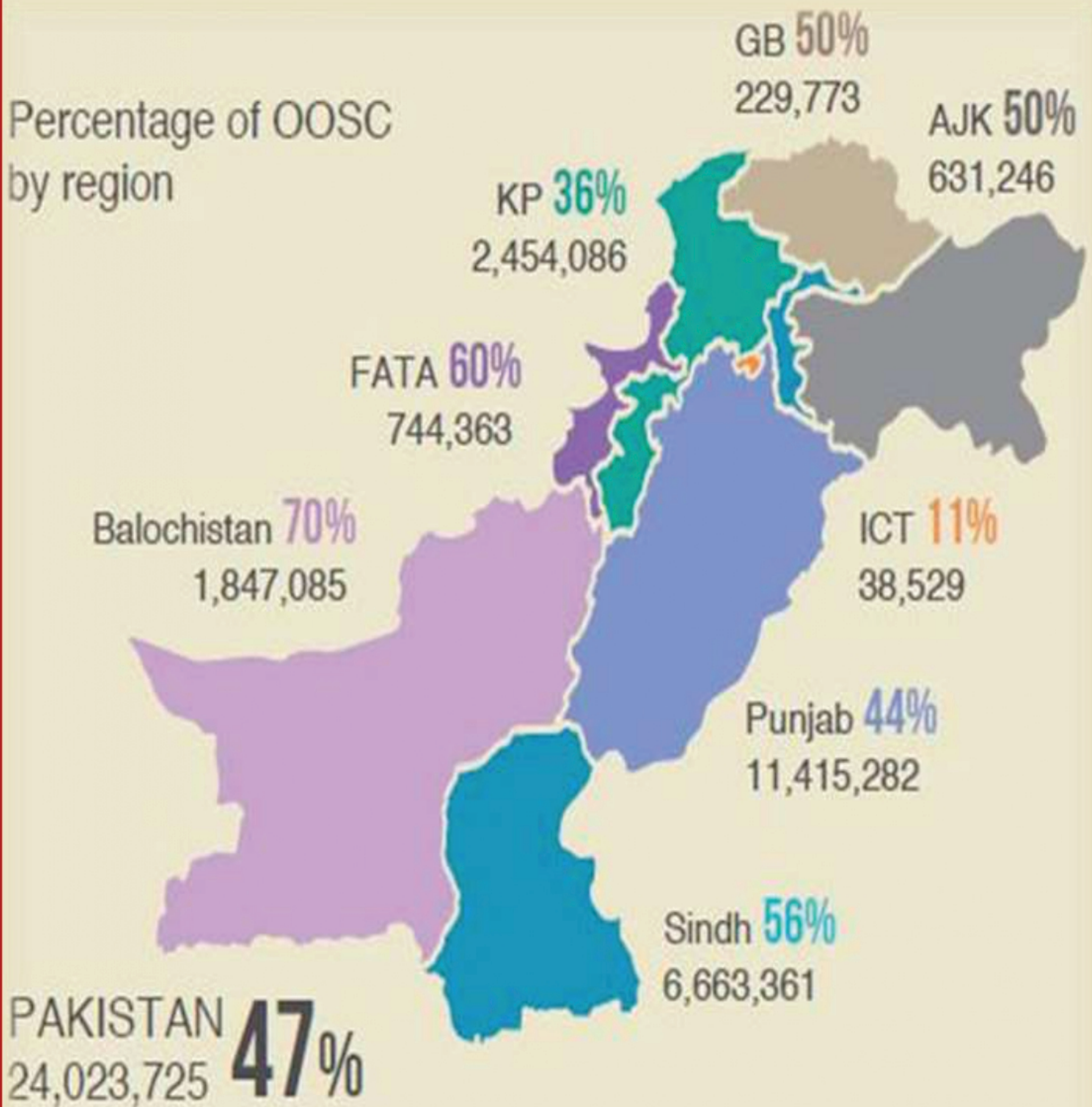
TEL AVIV, 21 May 2021, (TON): Israeli security Cabinet unanimously adopted Egypt's initiative for a bilateral unconditional ceasefire on 20 May, which would take effect on 23:00 GMT on Thursday. Hamas has also confirmed its plans to abide by the truce. Hamas' military wing's spokesman, Abu Obeida, said. "We say clearly: we have prepared for the strike that would affect whole Palestine - from Haifa to Ramon - but we have suspended this massive rocket strike on the enemy as we have agreed on the ceasefire to watch the enemy's behavior," He added that Hamas could launch this attack in case of the ceasefire's collapse.

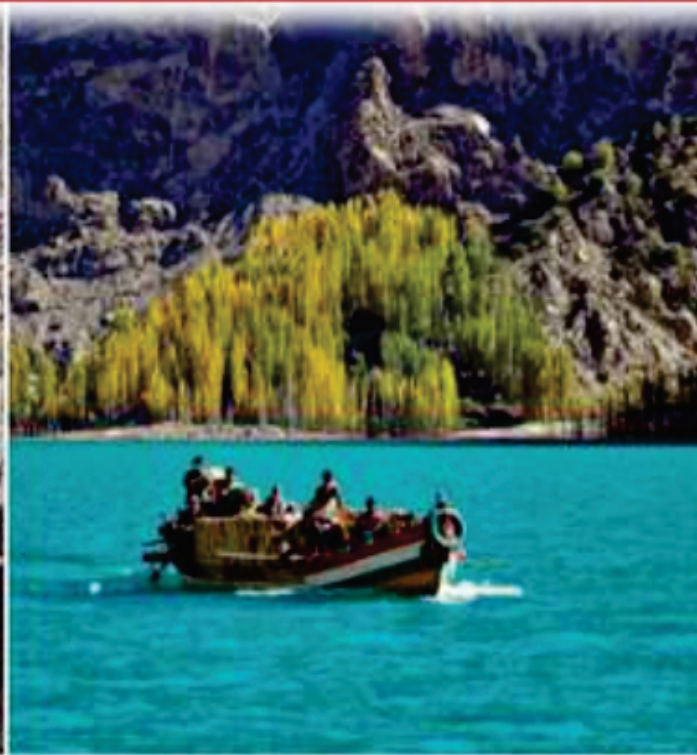
Earlier, on Wednesday, the United States said it opposes a proposed UN Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire in the conflict between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers, reiterating that it could interfere with the Biden administration's efforts to end the hostilities.



Where do most of Pakistan's out-of-school children live?

Percentage of OOSC
by region





Shrinking Palestine

Expanding Israel



Who's the Victim?

