

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



March 11, 2015

The Inevitable Solution of Dumping Rain Water!

Just like last year, many areas of the city once again turned into lakes and rivers after the heavy rainfall. Thanks to the natural forces, the rains are not continuous and severe as it was last year, otherwise, the losses could have been even more disastrous. However, a number of roads were blocked by this sewerage water and a number of cars got blocked in the water and it became a matter of great concern to the owners of mud houses that came under the threat of destruction and collapse due to the permanent stay of this rain water. The residents of Taimani Project and a number of other points in city were in frustration after the rain. Just like the previous years, the city municipality once again resorted to the old strategy of removing water with sewerage water dumping tankers. Thanks to the limited rains, this baseless strategy could have disclosed the faults in the overall administration of the capital municipality.

Last year as well, a number of houses had collapsed in some parts of the city after heavy rainfall and when the sewerage water remained on roads and streets for many days. At that time as well, same problems were raised in these pages and solutions were suggested. However, no serious efforts were made and the problem still remains awaits a permanent solution.

In order to understand the nature of this problem, we may have to go back to the days when the capital city started expanding rapidly and due to the lack of a proper authority and planning, no proper attention was given on the long-term needs of the city. The city of more than a million grew to more than four million in a decade and it brought heavy pressure on the housing sector of the country. Large numbers of new houses were built and the city was filled with hundreds of residential plazas. While building these houses, shops, plazas and shopping malls, no proper planning was taken into consideration. On the other hand, the rampant corruption in the construction of roads and other public infrastructures also aggravated the situation. The roads were built and a weak channel of sewerage canals were also constructed but there was not present sincere efforts and proper planning behind these due to which these canals never served their purpose. At present, majority of these canals are broken or are filled with trash and waste materials and in fact, there is not present any proper way of the removal of rain water from the city. It is also a fact that our sewerage water is dumped in the sewerage wells present in every house. In the same manner, residents of Kabul also obtain the water for household use from the deep-well tube wells taken out using tube-well machines. This direct water can be called the most dangerous as it is not filtered and at the same time, it can be the mixture of the sewerage water being dumped near the same well.

Another factor responsible for this is the carelessness of people and especially the lack of awareness about these canals added to severity to the situation. People are not in habit of using road-side canals or ditches properly and it is the reason why, almost all the canals have become useless. Except for the rain water, there is never any flow in these road-side canals and they remain filled with waste materials throughout the year.

The solution for this problem is not so easy. It can be eased with short-term arrangements but for a city that is rapidly expanding, more proper and long-term efforts are needed. The complete system of roads, the altitudes of roads and streets, and the possible points of rain and sewerage water collection should be studied and then a mega project might be needed to solve this problem. Although this solution may require investments of billions of dollars and may require many years for completion but it seems to be the only solution for the problem. Many megacities of the world have worked out such plans successfully. Usually, international donor organizations arrange funds for such mega projects. It is certain that a number of international donor agencies would arrange funds for any such project but it must be taken care that this project should be corruption free. In last 13 years of democracy, the notorious corruption not only ate away billions of dollars of international assistance but also resulted in the loss of trust of international community and now, international community expresses its reservations before extending any kind of help in this regard.

The above solution is the only permanent solution of this problem. If this problem is not solved in a proper manner, we would keep suffering in winters. The residents of the city would not only lose their assets but the city municipality would also be spending reasonable amount for temporary arrangements. It becomes the responsibility of the government to solve the problems of the citizens and it is one of the most important problems faced by the citizens.



Supporting Women's Rights?

By Hujjatullah Zia

The novelty of women's issues begins to pall and the hackneyed phrases of rape and violence can no more raise public concerns. The vapid incidents, for instance a teenage girl fell prey to gang rape, a woman's head was bashed on the wall or she was tortured to death, a female child was molested by the man of her next-door neighbor, an unmarried girl gave birth to three children as a result of her father's molestation, a school girl lost her life in a suicide bombing, a female parliamentarian survived a terrorist attack, etc. can hardly shake one's conscience. Moreover, the rhetorical speeches made by officials on public ceremonies appear to remain as mere words and the issue of women's rights is used as political deception during electoral campaigns to curry their favor. Hence, the problem is not only the violation of women's rights and dignity but also the exploitation of her emotions.

The glib talks and mouth-watering speeches, about women's rights, during electoral campaigns are not the panaceas for the wounds made in the hearts of Afghan women. Therefore, it would be naive of them to further fall for the bogus claims made by political parties. How long Afghan politicians would tantalize women via usual clichés? Only magnanimous actions can allay the anguish of Afghan women. After all, the feminist parties, civil rights' activists, officials, etc. should support the rights and status of women in an effective and suitable manner.

All pro-women voices will not be considered positive. For instance, reports say that a group of Afghan men marched through Kabul last Thursday to draw attention to women's rights by donning head-toe burqas. The men marched under a leaden sky, with the bright blue burqas falling over their heads down to muddy sneakers and boots. The demonstrators, associated with a group called Afghan Peace Volunteers, said they had organized the march ahead of International Women's Day on March 8.

However, this sort of defending women has hurt the feelings of some female passersby. As a result, Medina Ali, a 16-year-old student is quoted as, "We don't need anyone to defend our rights. This is just a foreign project to create a bad image for the burqa and Afghanistan. They're trying to make those of us who cover our faces feel bad." Furthermore, an older woman Bibi Gul, who wore a burqa herself, is quoted as, "My husband and son tell me I should take my burqa off. But I'm used to it. I've been wearing this for 35 years."

During the Taliban regime, Afghan women used to put on burqa un-

der duress, however now they wear of their own volition. Since burqa is part of cultural norms, attacking the demeanor of women will lead to their reaction. For instance, in some villages of Afghanistan, wearing burqa is incumbent on women - as a feminine custom. In addition, some use burqa not to reveal their faces or identity in insecure regions, as some policewomen do.

Afghan women have not yet railed against this sort of clothing or claimed to be in chains. Their hijab does not impede them of engaging in social activities. In a nascent democratic atmosphere of Afghanistan, women are given the freedom of clothing choice, whether to wear burqa or not. Some traditional women find burqa more religious form of clothing and talking about it would be a sore point. Cultural norms, which originate from public beliefs, should be held in respect.

The prospect of women's rights is really promising and not as bad as it is dispersed. As a result, a report said that more than 95 per cent of the 56 national constitutions adopted after 1995 guarantee gender equality, compared with 79 per cent of those enacted earlier.

The life span of girls born today is almost 73 years, on average, about four years more than in 1995. The number of women who die in childbirth has decreased by 42 per cent globally since 1995, with the biggest reduction in South Asia.

Girls and boys attend primary school at nearly equal rates worldwide - and primary school is now tuition-free in almost 90 per cent of low-income countries.

"Today, women and girls have a much greater chance to live healthy and secure lives, and their fundamental human rights are now protected by law in many countries throughout the world," the report said. "Women and girls have access to educational and work opportunities that were previously unimaginable." But on the negative side, the report said more than 170 countries currently have legal barriers in place that prevent women and girls from experiencing the same rights, protections and liberties as men and boys.

Overall, women are entitled to their rights and dignity on a large scale comparing to a decade ago in our country. They play integral role in political, social, cultural and educational issues. They have made great progress in their social life and run high positions in political and educational arena. Except in some traditional villages, they are not deemed inferior creature anymore. So, there is no cultural barrier for them to attend school or take part in social activities. To cut it short, we have to point out the progress of women too and whoever vows to support women's rights at any circumstances, has to fulfill their commitments.

Hujjat Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

China's Positive Role in World Politics

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

Countries like Afghanistan badly depend on other countries on a number of occasions. In order to meet its expenses, it looks forward for the financial support from other countries, in order to tackle the threat of terrorism, it depends on training and material support of other countries and in order to boost economic activities in the country, it depends on other nations' investments. No doubt, since the inception of a democratic government, many nations of the world extended help and cooperation with the country but unfortunately, majority of this help came through NGOs and also went back to the pockets of NGO employees and so majority of these helps turned out to be meaningless and did not achieve the desired results. However, the help that could have helped Afghans as how to catch fish could have been more meaningful instead of giving them fish.

In this scenario, the increasing role of our friend and neighbor nation China in the long-term sustainability and progress of Afghanistan is both exemplary and appreciable. Instead of pouring money on unnecessary projects, China insisted to its private and government sector to make plans and projects to strengthen the infrastructure of the country and make investments so that the country may once again rise on its feet. It is the reason why, there are large numbers of Chinese companies with long term investments in Afghanistan. The copper project of Mes Aynak is one of the examples where a state-owned Chinese company is planning to work for many decades, providing jobs to thousands to Afghans. The project has been made controversial by the nations whose companies lost the bid by terming it disastrous for the adjacent Buddha temples but it is a fact that at present, Afghans need jobs and bread instead of historic treasures. But the company has also assured complete protection of these Buddha statues and temples.

In the northern part of the country, another Chinese company is busy in extraction of oil and gas. According to geologists, Afghanistan contains vast reserves of oil and gas in its northern areas and their extraction can change the fate of the country. The Chinese company has made investment which would not only provide the country with billions of dollars of foreign exchange but would also give birth to a long-chained series of economic activities that would bring true prosperity in the country.

Two Chinese companies, ZTE and Huawei are the major telecom service providers in the country and due to their activities, government collects millions of dollars in taxes. Similarly, large numbers of people have been given job in their offices and sites.

Afghanistan also imports goods of billions of dollars from China and Chinese products make the major part of the Afghan market. In the same way, Chinese universities have given educational scholarships to hundreds of Afghan students who would then return to country to practically use their knowledge for the progress of the country. Similarly, China arranges tours and trainings to Afghan professionals like journalists, military officers, top government officials and others. These tours and trainings have made great contribution in uplifting the level of efficiency of these professionals in their respective fields.

However, it doesn't mean that Chinese government has not extended any financial assistance to the government of Afghanistan. Since the inception of a democratic government, China has given direct assistance of millions of dollars to Afghan government and this pro-

cess is still continuing and Afghans are still getting benefitted from this assistance.

Along with the assistance in fields of commerce and finance, Chinese government has played an important role on the political grounds. The government of China has been busy in making all the efforts to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan. Last year, China hosted the Conference of Istanbul Process on Afghanistan and due to the efforts of Chinese Premier, the world powers once again made encouraging promises not to leave Afghanistan alone and extend all the help in this regard.

On the request of Afghan government, China is also busy in arranging talks with Taliban leaders so that they should be brought on the table of negotiations. In this regard, a delegation of Taliban leaders visited China. After these continuous efforts, there are news of the resumption of peace talks between Taliban and Afghan government.

On the international arena as well, the role of China on financial and political grounds have been absolutely neutral and positive. Unfortunately, this quality is not much visible in other influential powers of the world who have always adopted the policy of intervention and military resolution of different problems of the world. China is also trying to deal sensibly the problem that has emerged inside its borders. Due to the interferences and conspiracies of international spying agencies, efforts were made to create disturbance in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China but Chinese government dealt it wisely by giving more and more incentives and autonomy to the ethnic minority group of Uyghurs in the area.

In the same way, Chinese companies are making huge investments in different parts of the world. The most important and positive aspect of these investments is to make investment without any discrimination of the political, religious or ethnic affiliations of countries where the investments are made. It is the reason why, a country may have political differences with China but its companies are busy in doing business with Chinese companies and it is also the reason of the gigantic expansion of Chinese economy.

However, China has to offer the best lesson on the political grounds. Almost all the countries of the world believe that their security would be ensured by the destruction of their enemy. This negative dogma has given birth to numerous wars and conflicts in the world. It is the reason why, even in the era of scientific enlightenment and dialogue, many parts of the world are under the blazes of war and terrorism. In the same way, different countries are busy in stealthy plans and hidden agendas to weaken others.

This has resulted in the division of the world on the basis of religion, geographic locations, blocs, political thoughts and others. Similarly, the important powers of the world believe in political and military intervention in the issues of other nations and countries and it is due to this reason that billions of dollars have been wasted on war and conflict and the world is getting more unstable and unsafe with every passing day. However, China holds a unique record of not making any such negative intervention in the affairs of other countries. It is the reason why, China is given due respect and has won the trust of the world nations by being neutral and due to this unique quality, China can be called the only nation without any enemies and it has earned countless friends by its efforts in promotion of political understanding and commercial prosperity. This strategy of China needs to be adopted by all the nations of the world if they want a peaceful and stable world in future.

Muhammad Rasool Shah is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at muhammadrasoolshah@gmail.com

Chairman / Editor in Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa
Vice Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Phone: +93 799 005 019/799 408 271/777 005 019

E-mail: mail@outlookafghanistan.com, outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Address: V-137, Street 6, Phase 4, Shahrak Ormeed Sabz, Kabul, Afghanistan

Sub Office: Shora Road, Street 10, District 6, Kartey 3, Kabul, Afghanistan

