

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



September 19, 2015

World Ozone Day

September 16th is celebrated as World Ozone Day. The Day was basically established by the United Nations General Assembly and is being celebrated since 1994. The main objective of the Day is to disseminate awareness regarding the depletion of Ozone Layer and at the same time highlight the ways to preserve it.

Ozone layer is a protective layer in Earth's stratosphere that functions as a shield and protects earth from the ultraviolet (UV) radiation. UV radiation is very much harmful for living tissues; therefore, without Ozone layer earth will be left open to these rays and ultimately all types of life on earth will be greatly influenced.

Unfortunately, the Ozone layer is being depleted by harmful gases present in the environmental pollutants that are released by different human inventions. If proper attention is not given there are fears that the life may extinct on earth because of rampant pollution.

There is no doubt that the scientific inventions have blessed human beings with myriads of facilities; however, the improper use of these facilities and their mismanagement has brought them some evils, as well. These evils have the capacity to disturb our environment and introduce disorder within the ecosystem that is necessary for the life to exist on the planet earth. It is really important to note that the possibility of life to exist within the known universe is limited to the planet earth alone. The distance of the earth from the sun, its temperature and other physical conditions exist in such an ordered manner that life is guaranteed here. Moreover, the dependence of living beings on one another, their interactions and their reaction and influence over the environment have certain proportional arrangement, which is termed as eco-system by the scientists. If this eco-system is disturbed in some way or the other, the life is disturbed and the contaminants that are let loose by human beings in the environment has the capacity to disturb it greatly and has the capacity to endanger existence on earth.

The contaminants basically form pollution, which can influence environment in many different ways. Pollution does not affect the air alone, there are different types of pollution that include; light pollution, littering, noise pollution, soil contamination, thermal pollution, visual pollution, water pollution and some others. Though from the very inception of human beings' civilized life, pollution has been influencing human beings, nonetheless, in today's world of ours, there has been extensive increase in it. With the industrial revolution, the release of pollutants within the natural environment has kept on increasing. Today, we are standing at a stage where many serious minds think that we have to be serious about saving our earth from the menace of pollution. There are some important concerns that most of the environmental scientists believe should be pondered upon extensively. The first one is the degradation of natural environment to the extent that can prove fatal for most of human beings. Already, the pollutants within the environment have been able to introduce different kinds of diseases in the living beings, which, if left unchecked, can go out of control. The other concern is regarding depletion of the Ozone layer and the overall warming up of the globe; this concept is known as "global warming". This concept suggests that with the increase in pollution, there will be considerable rise within the average temperature of the world that may, at maximum, result in the liquefying of the glaciers on the poles and may drown the whole world. Moreover, considerable rise in temperature may disturb the conditions of living on earth and may disrupt the eco-system and jeopardize the existence.

The need of time is to save the earth and life by adopting appropriate policies. Any effort in this regard needs to be two-dimensional. Firstly, every individual must feel his/her responsibility towards the earth and must make sure that he/she does not become a reckless being and must prove helpful for the environment. However, extensive awareness programs in this regard can be really helpful.

Secondly, there have to be efforts on national level as well. The governments in different countries can adopt strict laws regarding the safeguard of the environment and can make sure that different industries and enterprises adopt atmosphere-friendly attitude.

Some of the thinkers suggest that the issues that are raised regarding the depletion of the Ozone layer or global warming are not international issues and they are over-emphasized so that the attentions of the people should be diverted from the basic problems of the society and they become easily governable.

Such views have their importance but taking care of environment must never be neglected. There can be changes in the way the issue is treated but it cannot be neglected altogether. For example, the developed countries of the world can be made more responsible for solving the issue, while the other nations can deal with their basic issues. Moreover, there can be different ways of celebrating the days dedicated to Ozone, earth or environment. One of the ways is to celebrate these days in such a manner so as to highlight the importance of the environment and make the people realize to go against the factors that can harm it.



Afghan Women – The Victim of Patriarchy

By Hujjatullah Zia

A man has been charged with raping his 15-year-old daughter – who is now pregnant and under medical care in Jawzjan province – local news report. Police criminal offenses department director Abdul Hadi confirmed the report and said the man was in police custody. Hadi added that the man apparently threatened to kill his daughter if she spoke out about the case.

Violence and violation of rights weighs heavily on women. As long as women are deemed inferior and looked down upon, human rights will lack substance. As long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaningful contribution to society, progress will be slow. As long as the nation refuses to acknowledge the equal role of more than half of itself, it is doomed to failure.

Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men. Moreover, it is the manifestation of an unequal power between men and women.

The images of abused and helpless Afghan women incessantly flood our minds, undermining the significant role of women as agents of change in Afghanistan. During the 1920s and 70s, a period of economic and political stability, a large number of Afghan women asserted their rights and continued their education and professional pursuits. These women belonged to a privileged economic background; all the same their role and aspirations offer the world an alternative narrative. Acknowledging the agency, contributions, and strong voice of Afghan women does not undermine the stories of women like Nazai, an 18-year-old Afghan woman whose nose and ears were sliced off by her husband and appeared on the cover of Time magazine in August 2010, or Sitara, a 30-year-old woman whose nose and lips were lopped off by her addict husband in Herat province in 2013 and their audacious spirit. And the appalling story of Farkhunda, who was lynched to death on March 19 in Kabul, haunted not only Afghan nation but the whole world.

The history of Afghan women's struggle for social recognition and equality chronicles Afghanistan's physical and cultural devastation. Following the Soviet Invasion (1979-89), the Afghan Civil War (1994-96) and the dictatorial regime of Taliban (1996-2001) women's access to education, security and jobs has been minimal. Today, in the post-Taliban era, the Western "liberation" and Islamic fundamentalism each impose their own values on Afghan society as political models. Westernization, with regards to gender equality, does not take into account the traditional concept of family in Islamic or Afghan culture and tends to negotiate the rights of Afghan women outside their community and family. The violence against women can occur in both public and private spheres of life and at any time of their life span. Many women are ter-

rified by these threats of violence and this essentially has an impact on their lives that they are impeded to exercise their human rights, for instance, the fear for contribution to the development of their communities socially, economically and politically.

The gang rape occurred in the Paghman district of Kabul was one of the worst cases of violence against our women. As it is still debated on the national media, armed men stopped a convoy of cars that was driving back to the city from a wedding in the district of Paghman in the morning of August 23, 2014. The men dragged four women to the side of the road, where they robbed them and beat them up, the screams of the victims in earshot of male relatives they were traveling with. Three of the women were raped without a tinge of humanity.

A research found many risk factors that increase the chance of Afghan women experiencing domestic violence. Some of these include being in a forced, underage, or polygamous marriage, living in rural communities or communities with greater Taliban control, and the presence of strict gender role perceptions. Factors that decrease the chance of domestic violence include employment of spouses, consensual marriage, literacy of both women and men, living in urban communities, enjoying economic stability, and perceived satisfactory gender relations.

It should be noted that human rights are commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights "to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being," and which are inherent in all human beings regardless of their gender, belief, ethnicity, creed or any other status. They are applicable everywhere and at every time in the sense of being universal, and they are egalitarian in the sense of being the same for everyone. They require empathy and the rule of law and impose an obligation on persons to respect the human rights of others. They should not be taken away except as a result of due process based on specific circumstances, and require freedom from unlawful imprisonment, torture, and execution.

It is aptly said, "For every woman and girl violently attacked, we reduce our humanity. For every woman forced into unprotected sex because men demand this, we destroy dignity and pride. Every woman who has to sell her life for sex we condemn to a lifetime in prison. For every moment we remain silent, we conspire against our women. For every woman infected by HIV, we destroy a generation."

Although the integral sources of the Afghanistan's law root in Islamic Sharia which hold human and his rights, including women's rights, in high esteem and also our country has ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and ICCPR, yet the human rights are violated to a large extent and women are bereft of their rights in some ways. Hope the government acts more seriously and protects the rights of the citizens, especially the women's rights.

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Economic Arena and Destiny of the Nation

By Dr. Faisal Ali

Pakistan has experienced several economic cataclysms since her inception as a country on the map of the world in 1947.

Inheriting chiefly a biomass-based economy, the country must have pursued a path of industrialization and accumulation of human plus manufactured capital. The essential reforms for a fertile financial management were insufficient to save the country from the incessant pummeling of economic crises and those successful reforms which did take place in her history were mostly donor driven. Today, the economy of this country is in need of panaceas whose implementation can make a solid ground for the creation of an emerging economy.

A stable, flexible and a long term exchange rate policy is the indicator of a sound monetary management. Pakistan must understand that for a developing country under depreciation of capital due to energy shortage and unstable domestic security, the depreciation of currency increases inflation and decreases national income. For that reason, Pakistan must take steps for appreciation of her currency.

The maledictions of future economic collapse can be staved off by banning the fractional reserve banking and investment with borrowed money in the stock market. A true bull market can only be promulgated by expanding the national economy with employment made investors and continued production. In its recent report about the stock market crash of 2008, The Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) put forward recommendations for the revamping of existing broker regime, development of a strategic capital market development plan and a procedure for improved coordination between the SECP and the State Bank. For a fruitful outcome of these recommendations, the echelons of power are advised to take practical measures.

Today, the economy of the world is transforming from an industrial economy to an information based economy. In order to get pace with the trendy cosmopolitan culture, the government should evolve a strategy to lay a solid base for booming hardware and software industry. A separate organization for research and development of information based economy under the ministry of science and technology should be established to ferret out and explore new arenas in the field of software & hardware production and cyber warfare. The new commission should acquire the services of prominent and efficient computer and information technology specialists on piece rate. Let this organization be named as Pakistan Information Technology Commission (PITC). This commission should be tasked with establishment of a network of research laboratories & production units in the field of information technology. Pakistan received nearly 83.12 billion dollars in aid from United States of America (USA) between 1948 and 2014. The forays of economic managers of this country against the portending vagaries of economy could not pan out in spite of receiving such a gargantuan

amount of aid. Therefore, the culture of dependence on international aid and unilateral transfers for catapulting national income should be minimized and a policy of "trade not aid" should be pursued. Pakistan must ink free trade agreements with its neighbors to take full advantage of the booming free market firms. Measures should also be taken for creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) on Chinese style. For attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), Pakistan must improve its internal security situation, promote rational beliefs and cultural flexibility for assimilation of foreign investors. The Chinese investment under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a good sign of economic creativity in this scenario. The approval of energy projects on build operating basis must be spearheaded for specified period of time to solve the energy crisis on emergent basis. The fulfillment of the projects of Iran, Pakistan and India (IPI) or Iran, Pakistan and China (IPC) gas pipelines shall add extra piquancy to the story of solving energy shortage.

The realization of the best financial management demands the initiation of a shock therapy trial. In present circumstances, the treasure of dollars is not important. What really important is the domestic saving. For this purpose, the government must reduce its yearly expenditure. The operating leverage of each and every institution should be fixed during each and every fiscal year and the external borrowing should be brought a zero point. To reduce the debt burden, steps should be taken for debt relief through Rescheduling. Government subsidies should be cut. An atmosphere of free market economy should be promulgated and the privatization of the white elephants like Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Pakistan railways and Pakistan Steels must be carried out as soon as possible. A campaign against corruption and embezzlement would also help in minimization of extra expenditure. Policies should be shaped to make Pakistan a current account surplus country. With no previously accumulated foreign wealth to finance current account deficit, Pakistan is importing present consumption and exporting future consumption. In this regard, measures should be taken to bring a fair balance between exports and imports.

Lastly, a practice to use GNP as a primary measure of national economic activity should be instituted because according to Paul R- Krugman and Maurice Obstfeld, the national welfare depends more directly on national income than on domestic product (Paul R-Krugman & Maurice Obstfeld, International Economics, 5th Edition, page 304). Furthermore, The Human Development Index (HDI) constructed by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) should be used as a standard tool for measuring the standard of living. Vibrant economy is the essential item for development. In order to take the nation out of claustrophobia, agoraphobia and the mentality of pipe dreams, the state must take practical steps for creation of a new Pakistan otherwise this land of pure must prepare for a dead end like Greece and USSR.

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Daily Outlook
AFGHANISTAN
The Leading Independent Newspaper

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