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E-mail: fragranceofeast1998@gmail.com

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The Fragrance of East

Founder:

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)

Patron:

S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Advisory Board :

S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi

Mohammad Aslam Siddiqui

Shamsul Haque Nadwi

Editor:

Shariq Alavi

Asstt. Editor:

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Prophetic Call And Reformatory Movement

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

There are also revivalist and reformatory movements which expound the concept of Hereafter, its underlying wisdom, the benefits flowing from it and the invaluable contribution of the concept in establishing a stable society imbued with the sense of moral responsibility, but, evidently, the philosophy of after-life employed by them only as a means of educating the people and impressing upon them the spiritual-moral view of life preached by Islam. There is no denying the fact that their endeavour is praiseworthy, for one cannot have a congenial, orderly and ethical society without inculcating the belief in the Hereafter. At the same time, however, the method adopted by these movements is quite different from the way of thought, procedure of reform and the behaviour and deportment of the prophets and their followers. The methodology of reform evolved by the apostles of God is inspired by an unflinching faith and sincere conviction, a heart-left sentiment and fervid enthusiasm: it is a living faith which encompasses the entire being of the believer. The reformist movements on the other hand, are simply an external, outward expression of these deep-seated emotions of faith. The discourses of the former on sequel and life-after-death are marked by their instinctive conviction, glowing ardour, passionate eagerness, impressive earnestness and delicious ecstasy while the latter promote the idea as an expedient to social and moral reform of their people in order to build up a coherent, stable and ethical society. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

But there are among men those who purchase idle tales without knowledge or meaning to mislead men from the path of Allah and throw ridicule. For such there will be a humiliating penalty.

(Luqmān 31:6)

There are, in the main, two basic types of entertainment. To one belongs such intense interest in games and sports which make men negligent of their religious obligations. To the other is such idle talk which, once again, distracts man from performing his religious duties. In the above verse Allah speaks of both types — vain talk and idle tales. It is to the credit of the Qur'an that the above description applies in equal measure to the latest modes of fun and entertainment, especially radio and television. For these constitute idle talk. The Qur'an specially mentions that people purchase this. It goes without saying that today people spend large sums of money on purchasing various modes of entertainment.

Of course the Qur'an does not specify television or radio on this count. For these gadgets did not then exist. Yet it is not altogether out of place to say that the Qur'an disapproves of television and radio. Those familiar with Arabic idiom readily recognise that the Qur'anic expression covers all forms of idle talk and entertainment. The Qur'anic epithet "idle tales" stands for all radio programmes and videos. Let us be clear, however that the Qur'an does not disapprove of games and sports. Nonetheless, television and radio belong to the category of "idle tales". Even at a time when such gadgets were unthinkable, the Qur'an foretold these modes of entertainment which are no better than "idle tales". ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is related by Anas that the Apostle of God said: "Man grows old [and all his faculties are enfeebled], but two attributes of his nature become more young and vigorous, namely, desire for wealth and yearning for longevity."

—Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary—*Man is a prey to countless desires and endless aspirations, some of which are positively bad and these can be realised only when one is young and has money. It is the duty of the intellect to save a man from the unhappy consequences of such wishes. But, when due to old age, the intellect, too, fails in strength and its hold on the emotions loses its firmness, some of the desires develop into a passion and begin to rule over him. Attachment to worldly possessions and the desire to have a long life, generally, grow with advancing years. But those who are truly aware of the end of this world and have disciplined their inner selves are an exception to it.

Abu Hurairah narrated to us that the Apostle of God [once] said; "The heart of an old man always remains young in respect of two things : love of the material world and tall desires."

—Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary — As we have seen in the preceding Tradition, fondness for the material things of life, generally, grows with age but with those who have attained a degree of God-realisation and possess a true understanding of this world and the next it is different. In them, the love of God and yearning for the blessings of Futurity keep developing even in old age and each day of their life marks an advance on the previous one in this respect. ■

Editor's Note 

Way to Know God

It is universally accepted that God is one, yet there are contradictory beliefs about Him. Some say nature is God. Many think Krishna, Ram, Christ and a few others are God's incarnations. Others believe that all creatures are various forms of God and He is omnipresent. Some even hold that the human soul and supreme soul are one and He is formless. These divergent views cause confusion and lead many to conclude that God is a creation of people's imagination.

It is Islam which has removed all the falsities about God and has clearly proved that God is one, He is revered, He did not give birth to anyone nor He was born from anyone. Belief in Oneness of God is the first and foremost tenet of Islamic faith. It does not leave any space for an intermediary between the worshippers and their Lord in matters of worship and supplication. It does not allow any room for belief in the diversity of God.

God has always existed and shall exist forever. His attributes are perfect, worthy of praise and glory. He is above all limitations and

weaknesses, whatever His knowledge encompasses all and everything. This whole universe came into existence at His will. He is the Living, the Hearing, the Seeing. There is none like Him. He alone deserves worship, the highest manifestation of reverence. It is He who cures the sick, provide sustenance to creatures and removes hardship from the suffering.

He has created the Angels, who are high in rank and close to Him in relationship. The Devils (Shyateen) are also His creatures who are a source of evil for mankind. He has also created the Jinns. The holy Quran has been revealed by Allah and it contains all those instructions which forbids from evils and inspire for good deeds. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is His last messenger who spread the voice of Quran and also set Traditions which a Muslim has to follow. The easiest way to know God is revealed in the holy Quran and it must be read and re read for getting into the depth of Islamic ideology. ■

S.A.

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e-mail: shariq_alavi@yahoo.com
along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

The New World

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

This world of ours, they say, is very old. Yet, time and again, it has woken up from death-like slumber and staged a wonderful recovery. The last time it was restored to life and rendered active and flourishing again was when a grandson was born in the family of Abdul Muttalib in Mecca. Though born an orphan, the child was to take care of all mankind and give it a new lease of life. A life spent in sleep is no life. Time used up in killing oneself cannot be called existence. The real age of the world, hence, is not more than fourteen hundred years.

The cart of humanity was moving along the downward track in the 6th Century of the Christian era. It was growing darker and darker, and the slope was becoming deeper. The cart was gathering momentum. It was rolling down with greater force. The whole family of Adam was seated in the cart. There were, in it, the fruits of thousands of years of human endeavour, of ancient civilizations and intellectual development. The occupants were either fast asleep or quarrelling among themselves for a better place. No one gave a thought to the danger that lay ahead.

Physically, the human race was strong and vigorous, but its heart was

weary, mind fatigued and conscience dead. The pulse was sinking, and the eyes were about to petrify. It had lost the wealth of faith long ago. Not one man of belief and conviction was to be found in whole communities. Superstition was rampant in the world. Man had disgraced himself. He had bowed low before his own slaves and servants, and was ready to kneel to everyone save One God. He had developed a fondness for the forbidden and the unlawful.

The ruling classes, drunk with power, indulged in reckless oppression, their dogs lolled in luxury while the human beings starved. The mounting standard of living had turned life into a nightmare. Whoever did not conform to it was looked down upon as uncivilized. The common people lived in grinding poverty. Taxes and other duties and multiplied manifold. Wars had become a regular feature. People, everywhere, were entangled in their internal problems. They had neither the time nor inclination for the higher values and ideals of life. The world had become hollow from within.

The correction and reform of the world had gone beyond the power of man. It was not the question of a country's freedom or a nation's progress. The whole of mankind was

hovering between life and death. There was not one sore to be healed; the entire body of mankind was a big, festering boil.

No one seemed fitted for the task. Neither the philosophers, nor the writers, nor the statesmen. They, all, were the victims of the same malady. How could the sick heal the sick? How could those who were bereft of faith impart it to others? A huge lock had been placed on the destiny of man, and the key was missing.

The excessively gloomy state of affairs, certainly, was not pleasing to the Lord. Ultimately, He raised up an Apostle among the simple, unaffected, freedom-loving Arabs. No one, indeed, besides a Divine Apostle could rescue mankind from the clutches of death and restore it back to life. His name is Mohammad bin Abdullah. Boundless salutations to him, and endless benedictions!

Whose name did I utter, Oh God!

That my speech came up and kissed my tongue?

All the ingredients of life were intact. They had only become disorganized. The wheel of life had not stopped. It was moving, but in the wrong direction. The real fault was that the tenon of life had become loose. But was that tenon? Correct knowledge and awareness of the Creator, the resolve

to obey Him, to believe in His Apostles and to follow their teachings, and faith in the Hereafter.

The Prophet Mohammad set right the axle of life, but at the gravest peril to himself and his family. He sacrificed everything for the sake of it; he spurned the crown, rejected the offers of worldly power and wealth, abandoned the beloved home-town for good, and spent his whole life in suffering and privation. He tied stones to his stomach (to suppress hunger), never ate to satisfaction throughout his life, and made his family a sharer and partner in adversity and tribulation. He was always in the forefront on occasions of trial and danger, and kept strictly away from every manner of gain and gratification. Yet he did not depart from the world until he had put it on the right path and turned the tide of history.

Within a space of 23 years, the world was transformed. The conscience of man was aroused, the inclination towards well-doing was created and the power of discernment between right and wrong was developed. The path of the worship of God and obeisance to Him was opened, and man began to feel ashamed of prostrating himself before fellowmen and his own slaves. Inequality came to an end, and racial pride disappeared; rights were restored to women, and comfort was brought to the weak and the indigent.

In sum, the face of the world was changed in no time. Where a God-fearing man was not to be found in a whole country, hundreds and thousands of persons were produced who lived in the constant presence of the Almighty. They did justice even to the enemy and cared nothing for their own children when it came to fairness and impartiality. They were ready to depose against themselves and willingly bore hard-ship for the sake of others and espoused the cause of the weak against the strong. They were ascetics by night and horsemen by day, and wielded the upper hand over everything, power, wealth and desire. They knew only one lord and Master, the Almighty, the Supreme Being, the king of kings. They animated and inspired the world and instilled it with faith, civilization, morality and God-remembrance.

A new dawn was heralded. A new era was ushered in. As man changed, the world, too, changed with him. The earth and the sky changed. The marvelous revolution was brought about by the teachings and endeavour of one man, the prophet Mohammad. The family of Adam is not indebted to anyone more than him. He is the greatest benefactor of humanity. The clock of civilization would be put back by thousands of years if what the holy Prophet gave to the world was taken away.

Why should the day of the birth of the sacred Prophet not be blessed when the most blessed man the world has seen was born on it?

The springtide that has come over the world,

It is he who set the plants. ■

Think Now

Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment. Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself. Be like the sun for grace and mercy. Be like the night to cover others' faults. Be like running water for generosity. Be like death for rage and anger. Be like the earth for modesty. Be as you appear. Within tears, find hidden laughter, seek treasures amid ruins, sincere one.

– *Jalaluddin Rumi*
13th century Persian poet

Citizenship an essential right: Gauhati HC

Guwahati: Citizenship is an essential right and should be decided on the basis of merit by considering the material evidence cited by the person concerned, and not by way of default, the Gauhati high court observed as it set aside an ex-parte order of a foreigners' tribunal (FT) declaring a man in Morigaon district as foreigner.

The High Court's observation came while hearing a petition filed by Asor Uddin, a resident of Moirabari, challenging the decision of an FT order in April 2011 that declared him as foreigner under Section 2(a) of Foreigners Act, 1946, because he failed to submit a written statement by adducing evidence to prove his documents.

"Citizenship, being an important right of a person, ordinarily, should be decided on the basis of merit by considering the material evidences that may be adduced by the person concerned and not be way of default as happened in the present case," a division bench of justices Manish Choudhury and N Kotiswar Singh ruled in an order passed on September 9.

In his plea filed through advocate M.A Sheikh, the petitioner said that he is very poor and couldn't readily collect documents bearing names of his grandfather, father as well as his own for filing written statements before the FT. Hence, he failed to appear before it. He added that in order to earn a livelihood, he had to leave Assam and work in Kerala.

The petitioner also said that he couldn't communicate with his engaged counsel, who also failed to inform him about the subsequent dates fixed by the FT for his appearance. He pointed out that as he had appeared before the FT through his counsel on February 12, 2010, he had no intention of evading proceedings.

In his plea, Asor Uddin contended that the FT, in its case, listed him as a 'D-voter' (doubtful voter) without proper examination of documents.

However, special counsel for FT, A. Verma, said the plea should not be entertained as the petitioner himself is to be blamed for his non-appearance.

Taking note of the voter lists of 1965, 1970 and 1971, which included names of the petitioner's grandparents, parents and also his own, submitted in the court, the bench said: "There were sufficient reasons for the petitioner for not being able to appear before the FT to enable the tribunal to consider his claim on merit and accordingly, we are inclined to afford another opportunity to the petitioner to appear before the FT to prove he is an Indian, not a foreigner." The court, however, directed Asor Uddin to appear before the FT on or before November 8 else the FT order set aside will be revived and "law will take its own course". ■

(Hindustan Times, 14-09-2021)

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi And Nadwatul Ulama

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

Sheikh Syed Abul Hasan 'Ali Hasani Nadwi began his teaching career when he was only about seventeen or eighteen years old. It happened in the scholarly and literary atmosphere of Nadwatul 'Ulama. It was also the period during which Nadwatul Ulama was flourishing under the stewardship of Allaamah Syed Sulaiman Nadwi and was studded with distinguished faculty like Dr. Sheikh Taqiuddin Hilali, a renowned scholar of Arabic literature from Morocco. Thus Sheikh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and a number of his peers (who were of approximately the same age) were energizing and brightening the academic atmosphere of Nadwatul Ulama under the guidance of Allaamah Syed Sulaiman Nadwi and Dr. Sheikh Tqiuddin Hilali.

Notable among Sheikh Nadwi's peers were Sheikh Muhammad Nazim Nadwi, Sheikh Mas'ud 'Alam Nadwi, Sheikh Abul Lais Islahi Nadwi, Sheikh Muhammad 'Imran Khan Nadwi, and Sheikh 'Abdus Salam Qidwai Nadwi.

Sheikh Muhammad Nazim Nadwi became the Principal of Nadwatul 'Ulama. He then became the head of Jamiyatul Abbasiyah of Bhawalpur, Pakistan. Later he taught at the Islamic University of Madina, Saudi Arabia. After retiring from Madinah, he settled in Karachi, Pakistan, where he passed away a few years ago.

Sheikh Mas'ud 'Alam Nadwi was the chief editor of Nadwatul 'Ulama's Arabic magazine Al- Dhiya. He later became the head of Darul Arubatul Islamiyah, Jalandhar, India, and passed away in 1954 at the young age of 44.

Sheikh Abul Lais Islahi Nadwi was the first ameer (head) of Jama'at-e-Islami Hind. He led many religious and social projects in his lifetime. He passed away in 1990.

Sheikh Muhammad 'Imran Khan Nadwi became the Principal of Nadwatul 'Ulama. In 1958, he moved from Nadwatul 'Ulama to Bhopal to work on the expansion project of Tajul Masajid (a historical mosque in Bhopal, India). He also established a Darul Uloom (religious school) there. He passed away in 1986.

Sheikh Abdus Salam Qidwai Nadwi was the head of the department of Religious Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. He was also the dean of education at Nadwatul 'Ulama. He passed away in 1980.

Sheikh Nadwi was appointed as a teacher of tafseer (exegesis of Quran) and literature at Nadwatul 'Ulama in 1934. He continued teaching there on a full-time basis for 10 years. But the D'awah (calling people towards Allah and His divine religion) engagements required him to travel extensively which made him uneasy about receiving salary from Nadwatul

* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

Ulama. Thus he got himself excused from being a salaried employee in 1944 and instead continued teaching on a volunteer basis.

Nadwatul 'Ulama administrators knew his caliber and potential. Thus the then dean of education Allaamah Syed Sulaiman Nadwi appointed him as his assistant. After 'Allaamah Syed Sulaiman Nadwi migrated to Pakistan and passed away in 1953, Sheikh Nadwi was appointed as the permanent dean of education which significantly increased his responsibilities at Nadwatul Ulama.

In the meantime, his masterpiece book *Ma Dha Khasar al'Alam bi Inhitat-i-Muslimin* (published in English as *Islam and the World: The Rise and Decline of Muslims and Its Effect on Mankind*) which was published in 1950 gained immense recognition in the Arab world and made him hugely popular there. The book gave a tremendous boost to Nadwatul 'Ulama also as people felt that the institution which had produced such an extraordinary thinker and writer must also be of very high caliber. This attracted intellectuals and influential people of the Islamic world to Nadwatul Ulama. Sheikh Nadwi himself was also very eager to academic standard and stature of Nadwatul Ulama. So he used his contacts in the Arab world and regularly invited renowned scholars and academicians for lectures, seminars, and conferences at Nadwatul Ulama.

Sheikh Nadwi was appointed as the rector of Nadwatul Ulama in 1961 when it

was a little known institution with a small student population. But it gradually started gaining prominence due to its recognition in the Arab world and Sheikh Nadwi's efforts. He also received substantial cooperation from his close associates, especially the Vice-Chancellor Sheikh Muhammad 'Imran Khan Nadwi and Sheikh Qazi Muhammad Moinullah Indori Nadwi.

Sheikh Qazi Muhammad Moinullah Indori Nadwi later became the Vice-Reactor of Nadwatul 'Ulama. He worked very diligently to bring Sheikh Nadwi's dream into reality and remained Sheikh Nadwi's right hand until the very end. Due to the efforts of Sheikh Indori, Nadwatul Ulama was able to accomplish most of what Sheikh Nadwi had envisioned for it in education, research, publication and d'awah.

Sheikh Indori possessed exceptional management capacity and was uniquely talented in overseeing building projects. At the time of his appointment as the Vice-Reactor, there was only one single storey building which was used as a dormitory for students. Now that building has expanded into two storeys and there are five new multistoreyed buildings in addition to that. In the beginning, there were only 150-200 students. By the year 2000, the student population had grown to about 4,500 which included on the main campus and 2,500 in the satellite campus which were located in different parts of the city of Lucknow. Now Nadwatul 'Ulama has about 150 branches spread all over India

and there are a few in foreign countries as well. The current total student enrollment (of main campus, satellite campuses, and branches) is more than 15,000.

At the beginning of Sheikh Nadwi's tenure as there were only four levels/years in the primary curriculum and nine levels/years in the Arabic curriculum and there was only one section in each level. However, over a period of time, it gradually expanded into six years of primary, two years of secondary, three years of higher secondary, four years of graduate ('Aliyah) and two years of postgraduate (Fazilat) a curriculum that is spread over seventeen years. For graduate and post-graduate studies, there are two possible tracks: (1) Theology, and (2) Language and literature. Each track is further divided into several branches. For example, theology is divided into tafseer (exegesis of Quran), hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad), and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence); language and literature are divided into classical literature, modern literature, speech, and criticism. In the postgraduate studies, students are given a choice to specialize in an area of their interest.

Graduate students in the theology track are required to complete a one-year course in Islamic law and jurisprudence. All students (in both tracks) are required to complete a one-year course in Islamic thought and propagation so that they can get practical training and acquire necessary skills. Since the number of

students in the theology track has grown significantly, multiple sections are being run in it.

Nadwatul Ulama was not able to publish any journal or magazine for a long time. The Arabic magazine Al-Dhiya was discontinued only after two-three years due to lack of funds. Similar was the fate of the Urdu magazine An-Nadwah. However, mainly due to Nadwi's interest, two Arabic magazines Al B'ath Islami (monthly) and Al- Raid (fort-nightly) were launched in 1955 and 1959 respectively they are still continuing. These magazines are quite popular in the Arab world and the number of subscriptions is reasonably high. At the end of 1963, the Urdu fortnightly magazine Tamir-e-Hayat was launched which has carved its own place in the Indian subcontinent literary circles. Last year, a quarterly magazine in English (Fragrance of the East) and a monthly magazine in Hindi (Saccha Raahi) were also launched and they are being well received. The main office of the World Forum of Islamic Literature, which is located in Nadwatul 'Ulama, publishes a quarterly magazine known as Karwan-e-Adab (Urdu).

During Sheikh Nadwi's tenure as the rector, four international conferences were held at Nadwatul 'Ulama. The attendees included the Sheikh of Al-Azhar University and several ministers, university vice-chancellors and dignitaries from Arab countries.

The first conference was on

religious education. It was a historic conference being the largest of its kind at any religious institution in India. It helped Nadwatul Ulama gain immense international recognition and stature. The second conference was on Islamic literature which was attended by eminent scholars, men of literature, and thinkers from the entire Arab world as well as from the subcontinent.

The third conference which was held in 1986 was on Islamic literature as well and the World Forum of Islamic Literature was founded on that occasion. The fourth conference was held on Qadianism in 1997 which was attended by Sheikh Saud ibn Ibrahim al-Shuraim (the imam of the Grand Mosque, Makkah) and Sheikh Muhammad bin 'Abdullah al-Subayyal and other eminent scholars and dignitaries from the Arab counties and the subcontinent. All of these conferences received widespread acclamation from religious scholars and learned people.

The library of Nadwatul Ulama was located in the same hall where classes were held. During Sheikh Nadwi's tenure, a separate five-storeyed building was constructed for the library. Also, a separate building was constructed for administrative offices. A number of residential quarters were constructed for faculty. Since the number of students has increased significantly, more facilities are being acquired in the outskirts of the city of Lucknow. Due to these facilities and diverse programs that Nadwatul 'Ulama offers, it has now emerged into a major

Islamic institution of higher learning.

Sheikh Nadwi constantly kept himself busy in research and writing and involved many others as well in these endeavors. The Academy of Islamic Research and Publications was established mainly for this purpose. The Academy has so far published more than 200 books and publishes material in four major languages — Arabic, Urdu, English, and Hindi.

Due to these accomplishments, Nadwatul Ulama has gained wide recognition in the entire Islamic world. It is as diverse as a university. Its curriculum is as comprehensive and broad as that of any major institution. It offers courses in both traditional and contemporary disciplines.

Sheikh Nadwi fully understood and embraced the purpose and academic standard that the founders of Nadwatul Ulama had envisioned for this institution. In their mind, it was supposed to be a place where young generation of Muslims could be nurtured and groomed. It thus required a rigorous evaluation of both the system of education and its curriculum to determine if it was fulfilling the desired objective and producing the desired kind of graduates.

Muslims need to know and understand what responsibilities Allah has placed on them, what are the challenges of the community, and which skills and qualities are needed to fulfill them. In Sheikh Nadwi's eyes, an educated person

should be a mard-e-momin (a true believer) who understands the challenges of the hour and is fully prepared to meet them.

Regarding the curriculum, Sheikh Nadwi's vision was that it should embody good of both the old and the new. That is why one of the fundamental principles which govern the curriculum of Nadwatul Ulama is that it must incorporate classical (Quran, hadith, and authentic and perennial works of the past scholars) as well as modern and contemporary knowledge which are necessary and beneficial in everyday life. With these goals in mind, the curricula at Nadwatul Ulama is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Sheikh Nadwi had the opportunity to closely observe and listen to the founders of Nadwatul Ulama from his very childhood. His father Sheikh Syed Abdul Hai Hasani was the Rector of Nadwatul Ulama until he died in 1923. Thereafter, his elder brother Dr. Syed Abdul Ali Hasani served in that capacity until his death in 1961. Thus Sheikh Nadwi constantly remained in close association with Nadwatul Ulama. He also understood the dynamics of the needs and challenges of the Muslims and Islamic world. Guided by these experiences and observations, he chalked out his plan of action and continued serving the millat through Nadwatul Ulama.

Sheikh Nadwi firmly believed and remained committed throughout his life that

the system of education and its curriculum must be geared towards producing people who could fulfill needs — current as well as future of the community, were not inferior to their contemporaries in any respect (such as knowledge and thinking), and possessed necessary skills to serve the ummah (Muslims and mankind). They must be well versed in authentic Islamic knowledge and traditions so that they do not wither away while presenting Islam to others. Furthermore, they must also master the skill of speech and articulation so that they can effectively discharge the duty of d'awah. To achieve all these goals, Sheikh Nadwi constantly refined and revised the curriculum of Nadwatul Ulama. The outcome is quite encouraging as has been demonstrated by the caliber of recent graduates.

Sheikh Nadwi felt that such a curriculum was needed not only by Nadwatul Ulama, but by every institution of Islamic learning — a theme that he often repeated in speeches at Nadwatul Ulama and wherever he got a chance to speak. He was of the opinion that the books which are included in the curriculum must contain material that fulfills the desired objectives of education. That is why he greatly emphasized upon the development of high-quality books and personally took active part in preparing them.

With that goal in mind, he, with the assistance of his students, prepared textbooks for courses in the Arabic language and literature. These books

ultimately replaced the books which Nadwatul 'Iama had to import from Egypt. Such efforts made Nadwatul Ulama self-sufficient with its own in-house developed textbooks in several areas including Arabic language and literature. These textbooks are now fulfilling the needs of other institutions as well and they have been adopted by several government and parochial institutions both inside and outside India.

Sheikh Nadwi held the view that a curriculum that was purely abstract and theoretical was not so beneficial. So he emphasized on incorporating practical training and real-life experiences in the curriculum and included them in the curriculum of Nadwatul Ulama.

Though the resources of Nadwatul Ulama are limited, efforts are being consistently made to accomplish the goals that were set by Sheikh Nadwi. A lot has already been achieved and the outcome has received acclamation from all over the world. But we are still far away from where Sheikh Nadwi wanted us to be. However, his students and associates are earnestly following the path that he has shown and they are committed to continuing the mission.

Sheikh Nadwi received strong support from many of his associates and patrons such as Sheikh Muhammad 'Imran Khan Nadwi, Sheikh 'Abdus Salam Qidwai Nadwi (as the dean of education), Sheikh Mohibullah Laari Nadwi (as the Principal), and Sheikh Muhammad

Manzoor N'umani. Among the faculty, the contributions of Sheikh Muhammad Owais Nagrami Nadwi, Sheikh Muhammad Ishaq Sandelvi, and Shah Halim 'Ata Ceyloni are worth mentioning.

Among Sheikh Nadwi's students, Sheikh Qazi Muhammad Moinullah Indori Nadwi, who later became the Vice-Reactor of Nadwatul Ulama, was most supportive. He understood Sheikh Nadwi's vision and fully co-operated with him in its execution. He played a key role in expanding Nadwatul Ulama's building facilities and making it financially stable. Since Sheikh Indori had spent a considerable amount of time in the effort of d'awah after completing his education, he was also very instrumental and effective in inculcating importance of d'awah among the students of Nadwatul Ulama.

After Sheikh Abdus Salam Qidwai Nadwi passed away in 1980, Dr. Abdullah Abbas Nadwi who was a former student of Sheikh Nadwi was appointed as the dean of education in his place. Since Dr. Abdullah Abbas Nadwi was an alumnus of Nadwatul Ulama, he took special interest in the affairs of his alma mater and did whatever was within his reach to serve it. Although he was living in Makkah, he often used to come to Nadwatul Ulama on his own expenses to look after the affairs of Nadwatul Ulama.

When Sheikh Muhammad Imran Khan Nadwi moved to Bhopal in 1958, Sheikh Abul Irfan Khan was appointed as

the Acting Principal in his place. Sheikh Abul Irfan Khan Nadwi, through his able administration, gave full co-operation to Sheikh Nadwi. All these individuals gave their full support to Sheikh Nadwi in moving Nadwatul Ulama forward.

There are many among Sheikh Nadwi's junior students as well whose contributions are worth mentioning. The two who stand out most are his renowned nephew. Sheikh Syed Muhammad Al-Hasani and Sheikh Ishaq Jalees Nadwi. Sheikh Al-Hasani fully assisted Sheikh Nadwi through his writings which were in complete congruence with Sheikh Nadwi's thinking and vision. Sheikh was heavily involved in the operation of the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications and the publication of the fortnightly Urdu magazine Tameer-e-Hayat. It is sad that both of them passed away at an early age and did not get opportunity to serve for long. Both of them had also played significant role in making the first international conference successful that was held at Nadwatul Ulama.

In addition to the above-mentioned individuals, there are many who deserve acknowledgement for their services. The list includes Dr. Ishteyaq Hussain Quraishi, Sheikh Sa'idur Rahman 'Azami Nadwi, and Sheikh Nadwi's nephew Sheikh Syed Muhammad Wazeh Rasheed Hasani Nadwi. Dr. Ishteyaq Hussain Quraishi, in particular, was very helpful in supporting Sheikh Nadwi in his d'awah and other activities. I also happen to be among those whom Sheikh Nadwi provided

opportunities to assist him in his academic, d'awah, and administrative works.

The following excerpt from Sheikh Nadwi's autobiography Karwan-e-Zindagi (vol. 1, pp. 141-43) about Nadwatul Ulama's work and mission is being presented here. It will enable readers to know and understand the soul, spirit and fabric of Nadwatul Ulama. It is a part of the speech that Sheikh Nadwi delivered in November 1975 on the occasion of Nadwatul Ulama's eighty-fifth anniversary which was attended by distinguished guests from India and abroad.

In matters of deen (religion) and 'aqaid (faith), Nadwatul Ulama's policies are based upon pure deen which is free from all types of adulterations, altercations, fabrications, and deceptions and is fully in its original form in all respects.

In interpreting and explicating deen, we rely upon the sources which are pure and pristine, come from of the earliest period of Islam, and seek to reach very core of deen.

In actions and morals, we aspire to capture essence of deen, remain steadfast in it, follow the rules of shari'ah, stay close to the spirit and reality of deen, and acquire taqwa (piety) and salah batin (internal purification).

With regards to history, we believe that the best period of human history

is the one in which Islam came and reached its zenith and the best generation of humans is the one which was taught and trained by Prophet Muhammad and had graduated from the school of Quran and iman (firm faith in Allah). They are the best examples to follow. Our success, salvation, and progress depend upon how much we benefit from them and how much we strive to follow their footsteps.

Our philosophy of knowledge and education is that knowledge is a single unit that cannot be divided into old, new, Eastern, or Western. If at all possible, it can be divided only into right and wrong, beneficial and harmful, or means and end. We are guided by the prophetic command "Wisdom is the lost treasure of a momin (believer). Wherever it is found, you deserve most to acquire it." We are also guided by the old saying: Take what is clean and pure and leave what is dirty and impure.

Our strategy to defend Islam and fight against irreligious forces is based upon Allah's command:

Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power.

-Al-Anfal, 8:60

Our effort of d'awah, explaining the beauty and virtues of Islam, and preparing the hearts and minds of

people to accept the truthfulness of Islam is based upon the advice: Talk to people in a way that is appropriate to their level of understanding. Do you want them to reject Allah and His Prophet (due to faulty presentation)?

In matters of 'aqaa'id (tenets of Islam) and fundamental principles, we adhere to the majority opinion of ah-lul-sunnah (followers of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad) and stay within the boundaries set by the scholars of earlier times. With respect to the issues that are non-essential and jurisprudential, our position is that we stay away from those matters which are controversial and are likely to cause further division and misunderstanding in the ummah (Muslims). We inculcate good opinion about our past elders and try to find a good excuse for them (for their mistakes, if there is any). We consider the collective good more important than anything else.

In short, we are closely aligned with the school of thought — in knowledge, vision, theology, and jurisprudence — of Hakimul Islam Shah Waliyullah Dehlavi (d. 1762). Thus Nadwatul 'Ulama, instead of being a center of education with limited scope, is an institution with a broad and diverse set of goals. ■

Crime Against Women

- Mohammad Aslam Siddiqui*

Even after more than seven decades of Independence women are unsafe in the country. Incidents of rape and horrific cases of sexual violence have become the order of the day and occupy a permanent feature in newspapers and electronic Media. Here I reproduce editorial of Hindustan Times, 13 – 09 – 2021 which vividly reflects the prevailing scenario of women in India.

“In the past week, three heinous crimes against women were reported in different parts of the country. In Sakinaka, Mumbai, a woman was raped and brutalised in a parked tempo. In Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, an athlete was found dead with grave injuries and suspected rape. In Bemetara, Chhattisgarh, a woman was gang raped and murdered. These horrific, unrelated crimes point to a common denominator: India remains unsafe for women. The Delhi gang rape of 2012, which led to stricter laws, is now a distant memory, as horrific cases of sexual violence continue to shock the country.

The latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) paints a frightful picture of a steady rise in rape cases. India

recorded 32,033 rape cases in 2019. This implies that at least 88 women were raped every day. In 2019, 400,000 cases of crimes against women were reported, up from about 378,000 in 2018. These account for only 10% of the crimes against women. The conviction rate for rape cases is a dismal 30%. The 2012 gang rape led to greater awareness and possibly better reporting of crimes, which may partly explain the rise in numbers. But both the numbers and recent incidents also show that this ugly reality persists. Law enforcement must swiftly bring the perpetrators to book; state governments must ascertain areas of high crime rates and double safety protocols in those areas; and men and young boys must be brought into the conversation to dismantle patriarchy and power structures that destroy the lives of women. 2012 brought a drastic change in the way the State and society began viewing the epidemic of sexual violence; nine years later, India still has a long way to go.”

In a nutshell, it is high time the states as well as the Union government must take stern action against the rapists and offenders so that such heinous crimes may come down and an atmosphere of peace and serenity may come up in the country. ■

* *Director of Finance, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow and Former Principal Amirud-daula Islamia Degree College, Lucknow.*

(Cont. from page 30)

especially from Punjab, Kashmir, Maharashtra, Telangana and Karnataka, have also glorified the language globally.

All languages are beautiful and have their own charm and distinct persona, but Urdu, in particular, is sweet and poetic and at the same time, very adaptable. If a language can be developed through a combination of seven languages, what can be more flexible and welcoming? Many foreigners ask to hear Urdu, and when they do, their first reaction is: It is so soft and easy on the ears.

Phonologically, Urdu sounds are the same as those of Hindi except for slight variations in short vowel allophones. Urdu also retains a complete set of aspirated stops (sounds pronounced with a sudden release with an audible breath), a characteristic of Indo-Aryan, as well as retroflex stops.

It does not retain the complete range of Perso-Arabic consonants, despite its heavy borrowing from that tradition. From the grammatical point of view, there is not much difference between Hindi and Urdu. One distinction is that Urdu uses more Perso-Arabic prefixes and suffixes than Hindi.

Another interesting aspect of Urdu is that it has incorporated in itself the idioms and clichés of other Indian languages like Punjabi, Hindi, Marathi, Sindhi, Hindi, Sanskrit, Gujarati, Pushto, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Kashmiri, Telugu and Kannada. In fact, the inner spirit of Urdu is Sanskrit and it has been connected to it. Same is the case with many foreign languages, like Arabic, Persian, Turkish, English, Uzbek and Nepali that have gelled quite well with Urdu. It is assured that if a language has viable connects with the other tongues, the result is a very pleasant one, basically indicating an intermingling of and respect for cultures. In this regard, it is pertinent to mention that Urdu is a window to the cultural heritage of India. It makes us introspect as it is a language of a composite culture and joins broken hearts.

The NCPUL has been promoting Urdu on a pan-India basis by conducting seminars, workshops on calligraphy, graphic designing, e-books, Urdu media and other topics, besides teaching of Urdu, Persian and Arabic to people from all cross-sections of society and bringing out of Urdu magazines. Till such organisations are there and the language uses technology to propagate itself on social and electronic media, Urdu will live on in the hearts and minds of people. ■

A Blue-Print For Defence

- E. Habibullah*

The Ministry of Defence Report for the year 1979-80 states: "India's geopolitical situation is such that tensions at global level inevitably impinge on the defence and security environ of India and calls for appropriate defence preparedness on our part all the times. This requires careful, imaginative and long term perspective planning in regard to our industrial sector and effective management of resources allotted to defence sector, with proper balance between manpower, equipment and facilities for the most cost-effective defence management. Towards this end the accent in our Defence plans and programmes is on replacement and modernisation".

The report states with regard to China:

"We wish to improve our relations with China and believe that no problem including the border question is insoluble, given goodwill and determination".

"The development of indigenous designs" it says "requires a perspective of 15 to 20 years taking into account time needed for development trials, establishment of capacity and then an economic production run. Therefore, efficient defence planning calls for time perspectives much longer than that provided by 5-year plans". This is totally

wrong "Americans". But even if we consider it good as far as the general principles go, it remains to be seen, whether in practice these principles are borne out, what the implication of replacement and modernisation of equipment is and whether the 15-to-20-year perspective planning has been taken in view.

Defence versus development has often been called an old controversy. If India were to slacken on defence and take a back seat in the race for armaments, then Pakistan would exacerbate the situation in Kashmir and China would show scant regard for the sanctity of our territory on our eastern borders. These fears are not new, neither are the arguments in their support. The race for better and newer arms and equipment has been engendered by the favourite pastime of imperialist arms manufacturers whose economy thrives on arms-peddling all over the world. It should be remembered that big industrial powers resorted to arms manufacture and its sale abroad only after achieving a considerable measure of their own industrial prosperity. Their industrial prosperity necessitated the protection of their commercial and imperial interests which needed the development of their armed forces. The same analogy does not hold good in the case of the developing countries of the Third World. Any penny spent on defence by those countries should not be at the expense of the

* Late Maj. Gen. Habibullah retired from Army in 1965.

common man's bread. To deny to more than 50 per cent of the population their basic needs on the pretext that funds are required for defence, is not only to vitiate priorities but also to play into the hands of the imperialists who alone are the gainers in such a sordid transaction.

Defence today is a multi-dimensional problem. As long as a developing country has not solved its basic problems of food and shelter for its citizens, it should endeavour to achieve diplomatic and political goals through non-military means. Arms purchases can never be a substitute for statesmanship and diplomacy. The countries of the Third World have for long been involved in a never-ending arms race as victims of imperialist propaganda. If they do not realise that it is high time they did not play into the hands of those who, for their own vested interests, provoke them into buying more and more arms. This does not mean, that a country could be without any armed forces in the prevailing atmosphere of suspicion, doubt and distrust. It only means that the armed forces should neither be raised for national chauvinism nor to seek a vague imagined glory, nor to impress neighbours. The regular forces should be there to impart skills to the people to develop their resistance potential. Time and again, it has been proved when the entire masses are awake and have a stake in defending their country, they become an invincible force. The regular forces can at best act as catalytic agents to impart battlefield and technical skills needed for mass resistance. This is the

age of the masses and defence, therefore, should be mass-oriented. Mass-orientation for defence is intimately associated with a just cause and the dedication to it. A people fighting for the defence of their hearths and homes invariably have justice on their side and also the dedication associated with it. Such devotion and dedication acquire a measure of invincibility when what they are defending is worth defending. The basic sinews of defence, therefore, are these qualities imparted to the defenders by the nation. Playing merely on nationalist sentiment may work temporarily but unless it is backed by a measure of material prosperity and freedom, mere jingoism will not carry one very far.

The present-day international balance is based more on economic considerations than military. It would be safe to assume that the days of any land or sea invasion by one country against another, are a matter of the past. Any such disturbance of the geopolitical power balance would involve big powers and an international reaction. For a country of the Third World to think of its armament policies on the pattern of big industrial nations is short-sighted and unrealistic in the extreme.

In view of the fact that the majority of the third world countries are industrially backward and are dependent on foreign countries for their military equipment as well as for economic aid, it is obvious that no war between them can start or finish without the approval of powerful countries, tacit or otherwise. Successive wars in the

West Asian theatre or on the Indian sub-continent have proved beyond all doubt how pathetically dependent on the big industrial powers the Third World countries are in taking decisions about peace and war. Against this background it should not be difficult to see that, no matter what pile of arms is collected by any Third World country, it will always be within the capability of a big industrial power to tilt the scales by giving a last-minute concession to the other party. The elaborately built armed forces of a country can be rendered vulnerable by the small act of a big power disturbing this balance. If this is conceded, will there be the least justification for a poor and hungry country to commit its resources to the purchase of often second-rate arms and equipment hemmed in by political conditions? These conditions may be openly expressed or may act as a silent political debt which the countries of the Third World owe to the donors. It has been observed that wars in the sensitive areas of the Third World take place at an interval of about 10 years and last for about two to three weeks. An analysis of these wars, whether in the Middle East or on the Indo-Pak subcontinent, shows their consumption in men, material and equipment involved to be colossal. Such an expensive game has to be co-related to the end-result which more often than not is a ceasefire line with a few pockets on either side of the international boundary involved. Is this result commensurate with the price paid in the denial of development and even the necessities of life to more than 50 per cent of the population which lives below the

poverty line decade after decade? The Third World countries will only help to keep the Western arms factories going and to provide employment to their millions of workers engaged in arms production, but they will do so at great risk to their own population.

The Arabic magazine 'Akhbar el Usboo' published from Jordan, 19th June 1980, quotes some telling figures of weapon production and weapon sales of the advanced industrial nations of the world. It estimates that during the period 1981—1985 one million dollars will be spent every minute on weapons. In 1985 the amount is expected to be double that estimated for this period. It expresses the fear that this will not only adversely affect international trade and bring about imbalance in currencies? but will also bring about a depression mostly affecting the Third World countries.

An idea of the amount of vital metals and other commodities the US armament industry consumes can be gauged from the following figures quoted by the same source. The US expends 600,000 tonnes of aluminium, 250,000 tonnes of copper and 500,000 tonnes of titanium on armaments. These figures represent 40 per cent of the total US needs. The US armed forces use 270 million barrels of oil a year representing two-thirds of the consumption of the entire African continent. The US arms exports in 1979 amounted to 13,000 million dollars and the anticipated figure for 1980 is 14,500 million dollars. It is true, one has to take into consideration the realities and these

events do not follow ordinary logic. Yet it is also true that certain facts have to be stated, emphasised and reiterated, if only to mould and shape the opinions of policy-makers of Third World countries. The leaders of the Third World are not so lacking in patriotism as to lose the entire perspective and succumb headlong to pictures of false glory, national chauvinism or the politics of pressure.

It will be easy enough to manipulate the geo-politics of a region pushed by circumstances, but a misapplied pursuit of geo-politics can equally land a Third World country in the vortex of international power politics.

The modern theories of resistance, particularly mass resistance, indicate that it is a very potent weapon. The question whether mass resistance alone is capable of operating against a well-equipped regular army, admits of no readymade solutions to fit all situations in all countries. There are many variables in it. However, one thing can be stated with confidence; whereas superior forces equipped with sophisticated weapons may win a battle, they will never be able to win against a long-drawn out campaign of mass resistance. It is, therefore, more than evident, that a combination of mass resistance potential beefed up, strengthened, supported and trained by the regular forces, becomes invincible when defending its own territory. No occupation force can now afford to operate in totally hostile environs for long.

It has been seen from recent history, when faced by guerrilla warfare and with an ever-present threat to the lines of

communication, a regular army per force has to detach a sizeable part of its forces for protective duties, thus reducing its bayonet power. If this continues over a period of time, the regular forces will soon find it an almost impossible task to maintain their lines of communication intact, if these happen to be long and vulnerable. While an occupation force suffers in every manner, in morale, men and material, the dedicated defenders gain added strength from day to day. It has been estimated that the additional requirements of regular troops operating in totally hostile and vulnerable environs can be as high as 20:1 or even 30:1. This compulsion made Turkey lose its empire, when during World War I, Lawrence of Arabia demonstrated the tactics of mobile guerrilla warfare and the devastating effect it had on the deployment of regular Turkish forces extended over a long line of communication. The Turkish troops found it impossible to protect and maintain their lines of communication. This factor was the last nail in the coffin of the Ottoman Empire. Again during World War II, the Yugoslav partisans let loose hell on the German occupation forces, even as the mass resistance within the U.S.S.R. dealt decisive blows to the invading forces. Leaders of mass resistance became an essential part of operational planning and to a great measure contributed to the utter demoralisation and subsequent collapse of the sophisticated Panzer divisions of the German army.

Nearer home, there are examples—as partly mentioned earlier—like the war in Malaya, the great Chinese advance

sweeping all China under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung, the Vietnamese operations, the operations in the Yemens and the very many examples of struggle in Africa. During the 1973 Yom Kippur War between Israel and the Arabs; the people of Suez and Ismailia put up stout resistance at the mass level, despite the fact that there was hardly a house in Port Suez which was intact. Suez, therefore, became a symbol of invincibility and dogged resistance at the popular level, supported by the Egyptian armed forces available. In fact one would be nearer the truth to conclude that towards the closing stages of that war, both in Egypt and Syria, resistance was assuming a mass base. Such was the mass enthusiasm and such was their fervour and readiness, that even the leadership was afraid of losing control over them. There is no doubt, had the modes of mass-struggle and resistance been developed further and been allowed to play their full part, a final decision could have been reached by the Arabs.

In India, too, some thought appears to have been given to the development of mass resistance in the wake of the 1962 debacle. The idea was sound but its practical implementation fell far short of the concept to prove its mettle. Reorganising mass resistance on a territorial basis is the only sound and reliable method of defending one's hearth and home with all One's might and dedication. India's borders and 'lands offer a variety of features and obstacles which can be developed into formidable disincentives to any prospective invaders.

What is needed is a skilled base conscious of its power and responsibility.

The world is surely faced with the problem of survival because of the stupendous expenditure on armaments. How seriously the world itself is taking the situation, is obvious from the Report of the Brandt Commission convened recently to suggest remedies to reform the world economic system. The Commission proposed the adoption of a time-table to increase official developmental assistance from industrial countries to the extent of 0.7 per cent of the GNP by 1985 and to 1 per cent before the end of the century. Even this modest recommendation was rejected by Britain as being simplistic. Lord Carrington, while agreeing with the main thesis of the Brandt Commission that the prosperity of the industrial countries depended on the third world prosperity, nevertheless rejected the actual steps suggested by the Commission. In other words, the industrial countries of the West were unwilling to contribute even one-half of 1 per cent of the world's military expenditure for one year, an amount which could pay for the farm equipment required to increase food production in deficit countries by 1990. In the meantime, Britain has announced an increase of her arms expenditure from 7700 million to 8700 million pound sterling by 1984.

In a very perceptive observation the 'Economic and Political Weekly' of 2 August 1980 writes as follows:

"Defence is the most sacred of sacred cows. Anything passes in its name. The Janata government approved the

purchase of Jaguar deep-penetration aircraft, even though the price of the aircraft was raised from Rs. 7.5 crores to Rs. 12 crore apiece, on the ground of introducing improved features. Now the Congress (I) government is apparently on the verge of replacing Jaguars by Mirages in the name of the latter's superior versatility, though the Mirages will cost Rs 20 crore apiece. No one raises any questions about the cost. How can you, after all, when defence is involved? Can we afford to take defence lightly with hostile neighbours like Pakistan and China breathing down our necks ?”

“The powerful lobbies representing international armaments manufacturers that operate in Delhi are quick to plant stories. One of the latest is that Pakistan has already contracted for improved versions of the Mirage and will allegedly have an option on a still further improved version, though so far only prototypes of this version have come out even in France. Very soon agents representing British Aerospace are bound to plant a different story to counter what the pro-French, pro-Mirage lobby has been putting out. Strangely, these planted stories are taken very seriously by our national dailies and our celebrated columnists and commentators weave their political analyses around them in all earnestness”.

“In the process the fact is lost sight of that, be they British or French, the international arms merchants are, as always in the past, interested not in helping us fortify our defences but in binding us to their defence equipment industries. Two

cases from the past may be singled out for mention by way of illustration. These are our collaboration agreements with the French with respect to anti-tank missiles and with the British for the Vijayanta tank. Both collaborations involved purchase of complete units in the first instance followed by assembling and then manufacturing. Today, after eight to ten years, we have very nearly abandoned both projects. What is much worse, so many years have been lost in the development of indigenous design and manufacturing capabilities for both items.”

“The story with respect of Jaguar is no different. We have agreed to initially import 40 aircraft in fly-away condition, followed first by import of another 45 in sub-assemblies and then manufacture of 90 under licence, so that we can ultimately have five to six operational squadrons. If our past experience is any guide, well before we reach the manufacturing stage, the designs now contracted for will be out of date and the lobbyists will be arguing with strong support from within our own defence and civilian establishments, for new aircraft. Of course, there will always be the precedent of a Pakistan or China or somebody else having already shown keen interest in the particular aircraft”.

“If we think we know how to deal with foreign lobbyists, we are fooling nobody except ourselves. In case we are really serious about keeping these lobbyists at bay, we should be debating not Mirage vs Jaguar, but why Jaguar or Mirage at all. If we can, as has only recently been demonstrated, develop our own rocket of

intermediate range, can we not entrust our scientists with developing the aircraft and missiles to suit our defence requirements? Of course, they will make not one but several mistakes in the beginning. On the other hand, if all we keep doing is to build to other people's designs and specifications—assuming we get to the building stage at all—we shall never learn to design our own equipment, however crucial they may be for our defence. Hindustan Aircraft is a living example of such failure, but the blame for it lies squarely on our decisions-makers”.

In a book entitled ‘Pakistan’s Nuclear Bomb’ (1980) the authors, B.M. Kaushik and O.N. Mehrotra, have claimed to have exploded many myths. They have discredited or at least attempted to discredit many myths floated by the nuclear bomb lobbies. They maintain that even if Pakistan succeeds in making a nuclear explosion, it is not the same as becoming a nuclear power or as going in for a nuclear weapons programme. They have argued that Pakistan’s nuclear policies are based on what it considers its perception of India’s nuclear ambitions. They have cautioned both India and Pakistan, lest their misperceptions of each other’s intentions and capabilities should lead to an unhealthy arms race further crippling the already sick economy of the two traditionally poor countries of Asia.

A nuclear bomb or an explosion today has acquired more of a psychological importance in the public mind rather than an understanding of the limitations of its use in actual practice.

Conceding for the sake of argument, that Pakistan will succeed in staging an explosion or even in acquiring a few bombs, the next step is by no means clear as to how, when and where such a capability will be exercised by Pakistan keeping in view the current relationship of forces, the public opinion on the use of weapons of mass destruction and the material, moral and political consequences of such a step. Will the two nations of the sub-continent commit their resources to such a project of dubious advantage and improbable utility so irresponsibly in violation of their fundamental duty and commitment to the well-being of their own peoples?

The authors have appropriately pointed out the limitations to nuclear weapons’ proliferation. They have wisely suggested a regional understanding between India and Pakistan whereby the two could preserve their resources in nuclear technology for complementing each other in peaceful development and the application of nuclear energy, rather than fritter away such energy towards negative and destructive ends.

The increase in the defence expenditure of India from Rs 1535 crores in the 1970s to the present level of Rs 3600 crores has been variously attributed to the erosion in the value of the rupee, the need for replacement of obsolete equipment and various constructional and welfare programmes. Mr R.P. Chari, reviewing the book “Operational Analysis and Indian Defence” by U.K. Banerjee has stated “All these factors are justifiable. Yet

a feeling persists that although reduction in defence expenditure may be unrealistic, there is inadequate assurance that the defence apparatus is fully cognizant of the need to achieve economy consistent with efficiency. Are we, moreover, getting the most bang for the buck?"

What we are suggesting is not a modification of the existing defence management techniques or an evaluation of the merits and demerits of one equipment or the other, but a basic change in the attitude to defence by giving it a mass dimension which in its turn should be based on the socio-economic amelioration of the vast masses. The masses should provide not national support from behind to the defence effort of the regular soldier in uniform, but should become the main cog in meeting the threat willingly, patriotically and skillfully enthused to do so because of the vital stake they have in defending their land. The roles are thus reversed. It is not the regular soldier in uniform who provides the sinews of defence, but the people who take on the brunt of defence with their skills constantly improved by the cadres of small but efficient and well-equipped regular armed forces.

It is interesting to read of the military ruler of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haque's plan to create a Peoples' Army² on the Chinese model. The Reuter report has quoted Zia-ul-Haque as proposing mass military training to face both internal and external threats. The present 450,000-man standing army is to be included in the new force for a specialised role and the

General envisages a smaller and better-equipped standing military force. Unfortunately, the General spoke of his new plan being at the expense of economic development and thus exposed the wrong premise on which his thinking is based. Such plans, to achieve the desired results, should be based on the psychological and material preparation of the masses to defend their land with better skills and dedication. The Peoples' army is not a larger force to conventionally adopt a militant confrontational posture. Properly conceived, the plan should lead to a drastic reduction in defence expenditure, considerable improvement in industry and, more important than that, the government should represent more faithfully the aspirations of the people. If the masses are strengthened in this manner, the entire psychological atmosphere of the armed forces being the protectors of a discredited military elite will change overnight. The small and regular armed forces will cease to be an instrument of oppression, to the extent that the people in general realise their own power and learn to defend themselves on their own. The unending stream of visitors between India and Pakistan are all agreed that at the peoples' level there is much goodwill between the two. If, therefore, the vested interests do not manipulate the masses to keep themselves in power and the people acquire the power to decide for themselves, then such mutual goodwill is bound to lead them to abandon the path of mutually stultifying bouts of combat and divert their energies to better purpose. ■

The Language of The Heart

- Firoz Bakht Ahmed*

Badi ashrafiat hei zabaan mein. Nawabi ka maza deti hai Urdu faqiri mein (The Urdu language is so aristocratic that it makes even a pauper feel like a king)."

Urdu, an Indo-Aryan language, is renowned for its candour and timelessness. It goes without saying that since time immemorial, Urdu had been the lingua franca of Sindh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, undivided Bengal, Punjab, Doaba and so on, besides being the language of the heart and soul, as emphasised by the Hindi littérateur-cum-Education Minister of India, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', at the inauguration of a two-day webinar titled, The role and responsibility of Urdu writers in the age of electronic and social media.

Speaking during the webinar organised by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), Pokhriyal emphasised that Urdu is a language of not only a composite culture, syncretism and interfaith bonds but also of humaneness.

Thankfully, Urdu has kept up with the times and become a techno-savvy language with soft copies of hundreds

of books being available on apps. However, as social and electronic media is the biggest platform for the dissemination of information these days, it is the responsibility of all connoisseurs and littérateurs to ensure that Urdu makes its presence felt there.

According to eminent Urdu professor Zaman Azurdah, writers, poets and authors are the eyes of the entire social, religious and political system and they have a huge responsibility towards lovers of language and literature. Hence, they have to be positive and shed all negativity. And as the most powerful source of information is the social and electronic media, like the authors, poets and journalists of other languages, Urdu writers, too, must toe the line of the internet. Fortunately, many of them are already connecting globally via smartphones and computers and taking the language to the masses.

Even before the advent of Muslims in India, the country was connected historically, culturally, politically and commercially via Arabic, Persian and Turkish influences to the Middle East and other countries, including Iran, Sudan and Turkey. After Muslims settled in India, the conglomeration of people of various cultures speaking a variety of

* The writer is the Chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University and grandnephew of Bharat Ratna Maulana Azad.

languages like Rekhta, Hindavi and ultimately, Urdu, came into being.

This intermingling was also known as *lashkar* (group). The purpose of all the Indian and international languages is to achieve the fraternal spirit. Urdu is a beautiful language born out of the conglomeration of Hindu, Muslim and even English cultural backgrounds.

Dr. Humra Parveen, Department of Mass Communication, AMU, says that Urdu happens to be the language of the conglomerate tradition and culture of India that, after being acquired by the Khanqahs, educational institutions and the official world, also became the language of commerce. During the times of Mohammed Shah and Quli Qutub Shah, it became the Government's language. At that time, it was, in fact, the most popular language and owing to its poetic exuberance and ease of learning (which it is even today), Urdu replaced Persian.

The cultural and artistic tone and tenor of Urdu has been depicted generously in multifarious forms, including the *Mushaira* (poetic gathering), *Marsiakhwani* (elegy), *Ghazal* (poetry recitation), *Qawwali* (chorus), *Dastangoi* (storytelling), *Chahar Bait* (poetry competition) and so on, besides other art forms like drama.

The reason that Urdu proliferated and got promoted was owing to its

secular character and a universal base in India and abroad. Today it happens to be one of the most popular of all international languages. Not only that, Urdu is the voice of the sub-continent and has become an important link language for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

In India alone, as per Government records, Urdu is the mother tongue of more than 70 million people. However, an equal number of Urdu-knowing people are spread all over the nation. In the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, Urdu is the first language while in other States like Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, it has been recognised as the second language.

Nevertheless, there are some other areas where people have recorded Urdu to be their mother tongue, like Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. So far as the linguistic link of Urdu is concerned, its family includes Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and Dravidian languages like Telugu and Kannada.

Owing to its historicity, linguistic appeal, cultural multiplicity and literary taste, it doesn't have any religion or region. Connoisseurs of Urdu are found around the world. Besides, another salient feature of Urdu has been its linkage to the dialects. Writers,

(Cont. to page 20)

Mahatma Gandhi And National Struggle For Freedom

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

1857 was the turning point for Indians. They revolted against the tyrannical British rule in India and their policy of political expansion and economic exploitation, but they failed. This transformed the simmering discontent among the Indians into a powerful flame. Consequently, nationalism gained Momentum and national movement came into existence. Later on the struggle for freedom was carried on under the Indian National Congress and India became free on August 15, 1947.

The foundation of the Indian National Congress was laid on December 28, 1885. The formation of the INC was the most remarkable event in the history of India. Allan Octavian Hume (A. O. Hume) was a retired member of the Indian Civil Service. He played leading role in the foundation of the Indian National Congress. That is why he is considered as the father of the Indian National Congress.

Generally, the history of the national movement of India divided into three phases. The first phase from 1885 to 1905 is known as the period of the Moderates. Moderate leaders like Dadbhai Naroji, Surendra Nath

Banerjee, Pherozshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and others. They believe that the Englishman would grant 'Home rule' to the Indians when they would come to know of their will. They relied on the solemn pledges given by the British Government from time to time. Besides they had full faith in the British sense of Justice fair play honesty and integrity. They believed that British rule was a boon for India. The second phase 1905 to 1919 is known as the extremists or the nationalist Militants. Extremist leaders were like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and others. They are known as Bal, Lal and Pal.

Unlike the moderates who adopted constitutional means to achieve their aims the extremist exposed the true nature of the British rule which had been eating into the very structure of the Indian economy. Tilak presented the true picture of the British rule through his writings in his newspapers like Kesari and Maratha and exposed the so-called doctrine of the moderates that is the Indians' good progress under the benevolent guidance and control of the English. Ultimately Tilak declared "Swaraj is my birthright

and I will have it.”

By their speeches and writings the extremists filled the Indian people with fearlessness and infused in them such courage that they stood up as a rock to challenge the British imperialism. The sacrifices made by them did not go in vain. They shook the very foundation of the British authority who came to believe that their days on the Indian soil were now numbered.

Lord Curzon became the Viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905. Bengal was partitioned into two parts in 1905. The partition of Bengal and anti-partition movement accelerated the National Movement. In this connection a European writer Zacharias, remarked, “Out of Bengali emotionalism there sprang the new nationalism of India.” The anti-partition Movement strengthened the National Movement by giving it the weapons of the Swadeshi and the Boycott. It also gave an opportunity to the Extremists to lead the National Movement. It came to be known as the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement and had an important place in the history of India’s freedom movement. At last both the Movements bore fruit when the government gave in and revoked the partition of Bengal in 1911.

The third phase (1919 to 1947) is

called the Gandhian Era. Gandhi was one of those great persons who are called men of the age. Making an assessment of Gandhiji, Y.G. Krishnamurti said, “Mahatma Gandhi was not only a saint but also a great revolutionary. It would not be a misnomer to call him a revolutionary”. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 in a trading family of Porbandar, Gujarat. Gandhi’s other names: Mahatma (Saint)- by Rabindranath Tagore, 1917; Malang Baba/ Nanga Faqir (Naked Saint)- by Kabailis of North-West Frontier, 1930; Indian Faqir / Traitor Faqir – by Winston Churachill, 1931; Half naked- Saint (Ardha Nanga Faqir)- by Franq Mores, 1931; Rashtrapita (the Father of the Nation)-by Subhash Chandra Bose, 1944. His father was the Diwan of Rajkot state. He had schooling in Rajkot. After passing his matriculation examination he was sent to England to study law at the age of 19. He came back to India in 1890 as a barrister. He started his practice at Rajkot but later on he shifted to Bombay.

In 1893 when he was only 24 he went to South Africa as a legal advisor in a case on behalf of a Muslim firm. There the Indians were maltreated and many restrictions had been imposed on them. Gandhiji himself said: “My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in

troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and an Indian, I had no rights. More correctly I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian. But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticizing it freely where I felt it was faulty but never wishing its destruction. Consequently, when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906, at the time of the Zulu 'revolt', I raised a stretcher bearer party and served till the end of the 'rebellion'. On both the occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in dispatches. For my work in South Africa I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaisar-i-Hind gold medal. When the war broke out in 1914 between England and Germany, I raised a volunteer ambulance cars in London, consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledge by the authorities to be valuable. He fought the unjust laws boldly but non-violently."(The World's Greatest

Speeches, p 359)

Gandhi's Literary Works: Hind Swaraj (1909), My Experiments with Truth (Autobiography, 1927)-reveals events of Gandhi's life upto 1922. Gandhiji as an Editor: Indian Opinion: 1903-15 (in English & Gujarati, for a shorter period in Hindi & Tamil), Harijan: 1919-31 (in English, Gujarati & Hindi), Young India: 1933-42 (in English & Gujarati-named Navjeevan) (Lucent's General Knowledge, p, 115)

Having returned from South Africa to India in 1915, Gandhiji plunged himself into national straggle for freedom. He came restless observing the then deplorable conditions of Indians under the British rule. To drive the English out of India he made great strides in every possible way. To achieve he launched different movements from time to time. These movements no doubt played leading role in emancipation Indians from nefarious designs of the greedy aliens.

Civil Disobedience Movement:

At last the Government of South Africa had to accept several of his demands. It was a great political success of Gandhiji. He returned to India in 1915 after staying 22 years there. On his return to India, Rabindra Nath Tagore said, "In the garb of a beggar a great soul has come back." He established

Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat in 1916. He made a tour of the country and saw the conditions of the people. The poverty and ill treatment of the people under British rule, shocked and appalled him. He attended Lucknow session of INC held on 26 to 30 December, 1916 where Rajkumar Shukla, cultivator from Bihar requested him to come Champaran. Actually Gandhiji entered in active politics with Champaran campaign to redress grievances of cultivators oppressed by Indigo planters of Bihar (April, 1917) Champaran Satyagraha was his first civil disobedience movement in India. No doubt the Champaran episode was a turning point in Gandhiji's life. "What I did", he explain "was a very ordinary thing. I declared that the British could not order me about my own country."

Non-Cooperation Movement and Satyagraha Movement:

In March 1919 Gandhiji worked for peasants of Kheda in Gujarat for finding difficulties in paying the rents owing to failure of crops . Kheda Satyagraha was his first Non-Cooperation movement.

Edwin Montague, the secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy toured the whole country and assessed the public opinion and produced their scheme of reforms. It is called the Chelmsford- Montague

Reforms. On this basis of this report, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act, 1919. The Reforms of 1919 failed to satisfy the Indians. This time the Moderates left the congress and the extremists came to dominate it. The atmosphere was surcharged with passion and excitement. The English were afraid lest they should launch and agitation. With this fear in mind the British Government passed the Rowlatt Act in March, 1919 to crush any popular or revolutionary movement. It gave powers to the government to arrest and detain suspected persons and to search them without a warrant and to imprison them without a trial. Any person under this Act had no right to Appeal, Vakil and Dalil. This Act came to be known as the Black Bill. It sent a wave of anger and unrest throughout the country. A hartal was observed all over India on April 6, 1919. Gandhiji appeared on the stage and launched a Satyagraha Movement against this Act. Soon he became an all-India leader. After that the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre occurred at Amritsar on April 13, 1919. In which about 1,000 persons died and several thousand were wounded. This tragedy has a great significance in this history of India. Gandhi returned Kaiser-i- Hind gold medal to protest against Jallianwala Bagh massacre April 13, 1919. Even the

great poet Rabindra Nath Tagore also renounced his Knighthood in protest against it.

Chauri Chaura Incident and Withdrawl of the Non-Cooperation Movement:

Chauri Chaura was a village in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh. On February 5, 1922 the police had beaten up a group of volunteers picketing a liquor shop and opened fire on the crowd which had come to protest before the police station. The angry mob attacked and burnt the police station killing 22 policeman. Gandhiji was shocked and disheartened. He realised that the Non-Cooperation Movement was becoming violent. Gandhiji decided to withdraw the movement. The Congress approved his decision on February 12, 1922 and the Non-Cooperation Movement came to an end. Gandhiji was arrested on March 10, 1922, and sentenced to six years of imprisonment on charges of sedition. He was released two years later due to ill health. The sudden withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement and the arrest of Gandhiji in March 1922, demoralised the Congress and they almost went into political unactivity. Many leaders searched for an alternative to Gandhian methods and end this impasse. (History and Civics, p. 158)

Congress leaders C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru advocated a new method of struggle against colonial rule. This proposal was put forward at the annual session of the congress at Gaya in 1922, by C. R. Das who presided over it. But the proposal for council-entry was rejected by congress leaders like Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari. C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru resigned from their respective offices in the Congress and on January 1, 1923, announced the formation of the Swaraj Party within the Congress. Thus the Congress was split into two sections—**no changers led by Sardar Patel and the Pro-changers or the Swarajists.**

The Swaraj Party contested the elections to the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils in November 1923, and performed remarkably well. The Swaraj Party won 47 seats out of 105 seats in the Central Legislative Assembly. But after the death of C.R.Das on June 16, 1925 the Swaraj Party merged with the congress.

Khilafat Movement (1920-22):

The Caliph (or, Khalipah) Sultan of Turkey, was looked upon by the Muslims as their religious head. During the First World War, when the safety and welfare of Turkey were threatened by the British thereby weakening the Caliph's

position, Indian Muslims adopted an aggressive anti-British attitude. The Brothers-Mohammad Ali & Shaukat Ali launched an anti-British Movement in 1920-the Khilafat Movement for the restoration of the Khilafat. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also led the movement. It was supported by Gandhiji and INC which paved the way for Hindu-Muslim Unity. However, the Khilafat Movement soon lost its vigour and relevance when Mustafa Kamal Pasha dethroned the Turkish Sultan and declared Turkey a secular republic. The Khilafat Movement came to an end and merged with the Non-Cooperation Movement launched by Gandhiji. It left a strong sentiment of Hindu-Muslim unity. It played an important part in strengthening the nationalist feeling and led to political awakening.

The Boycott of the Simon Commission:

On February 3, 1928, the day John Simon and other members landed in Bombay, all major cities and towns in India observed a complete hartal. People came out on the streets and participated in rallies and processions. Wherever Simon went he was greeted with black flags and slogans 'Simon go back' imprinted on balloons and kites.

In Lahore, protests took a serious turn. Lala Lajpat Rai, the most

respected Extremist leader of Punjab was hit on the chest during lathi-charge. He succumbed to his injuries on November 17, 1928. Lala Lajpat Rai's death spread a wave of indignation throughout the country. During Lahore session, presided over by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in December 1929, the Congress passed a resolution boycotting the Round Table conference and declaring 'Purna Swaraj' or complete independence as the only honourable goal of the Indians. It also decided to launch a programme of civil-disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. The tricolour flag was hoisted on December 31, 1929, and Independence Day was celebrated all over India on January 26, 1930.

The Dandi March and Violation of Salt Laws:

Gandhiji decided to start the Civil Disobedience Movement by a violation of Salt laws. On March 12, 1930 Gandhiji with 78 followers left Sabarmati Ashram and reached Dandi, a village on the sea coast of Gujarat on April 5, 1930, travelling a distance of 200 miles on foot. During the journey the village people showered leaves on them and three hundred village headmen gave up their jobs.

The Quit India Movement :

The Quit India Movement was

brutally crushed by the British Government in 1942, and all the leaders jailed. But the British realised that another mass movement under the leadership of Gandhi would shake the foundations of the British Empire in India. The Cripps Mission which came to India to negotiate with the Indians ended in failure. The Second World War came to an end in 1945, with the victory of the Allied Powers. The British in such moments of triumph and glory took the decision to quit India. This brightened the prospect of freedom in India. However the British took a little less than five years since its decision to quit India in 1942, to finally leave the country for good.

In short, Gandhiji dominated the scene of Indian politics and freedom movement from 1919 to 1947. He left no stone unturned in the fight for India's freedom. He also adopted novel means to fight this war of freedom, which got new vigour under his leadership. The most striking aspect of his life is that he laid great stress on the unity of all the communities, especially the Hindu-Muslim Unity. He understood the strategy of the English "Divide and Rule". He perceived that unless they united, they could not drive the English out of India. Whenever, the communal riots broke out in India he staked his own life to visit the riot-torn areas and this

restored peace there. His efforts began to bear fruit following the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in 1919.

Mahatma Gandhi's greatness lies in the fact that he gave his heart and soul to the poor and downtrodden. He was engaged in a life long struggle against social evils like untouchability, communalism, dowry and oppression of the poor. He worked for the abolition of untouchability. He described the untouchables as 'Harijans' or children of God. He encouraged the use of Khadi to help the poor in the villages and set up the Village Industries Association. He led a campaign for the liberation of women from injustice.

In his magnum opus "The Discovery of India" Jawaharlal Nehru says: "Gandhi for the first time entered the Congress organization and immediately brought about a complete change in its constitution. He made it democratic and a mass organization. Democratic it had been previously also but it had so far been limited in franchise and restricted to the upper classes. Now the peasants rolled in and, in its new grab, it began to assume the look of a vast agrarian organization with a strong sprinkling of the middle classes. This agrarian character was to grow. Industrial workers also came in but as individuals and not in their separate

organized capacity. Action was to be the basis and objective of this organization, action based on peaceful methods. Thus far the alternatives had been just talking and passing resolutions, or terroristic activity. Both of these were set aside and terrorism was especially condemned as opposed to the basic policy of the Congress. A new technique of action was evolved which, though perfectly peaceful, yet implied non-submission to what was considered wrong and, as a consequence, a willing acceptance of the pain and suffering involved in this. Gandhi was an odd kind of pacifist, for he was an activist full of dynamic energy. There was no submission in him to fate or anything that he considered evil; he was full of resistance, though this was peaceful and courteous." (P. 360)

Before 1920 the national Movement was confined to a few educated youth belonging to the middle class. It had not touched the common masses. It was under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi that this Movement became the movement of Indian people who took part in his Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement at an unprecedented large scale. His movement were supported by all the classes of people of India irrespective of their caste, creed or religion. It brought about an awakening among the

people who became ready to suffer and sacrifice anything for their motherland. The struggle for national freedom grew very fast. Women also vied with men in offering themselves at the altar of liberty. Gandhiji had to bear lathi blows, pass through gunfire and stake his life. However, he was too brave to care for such dangers. He went to jail several times but it did not break his courage. He stood firm like a rock and added to the courage of his people by his own sacrifices and sufferings. He was always ready to make any sacrifice for his country. Such condition forced the English to leave India in their own interest. At first they announced their resolve to leave India by June 1948. But subsequently, they left on August 15, 1947. The country attained freedom. Mahatma Gandhi's role in the achievement of freedom was unparalleled and supreme. That is why after India became free he was unanimously elected as father of the nation. Gandhi was shot dead on January 30, 1948 by Nathu Ram Godse, a member of RSS, while on his way to the evening prayer meeting at Birla House, New Delhi. Lord Mount Batten described Gandhiji's death with these words "The whole world was well-off and rich with living Gandhi and with his death it has become pauper." ■

Around the World

On 9/11 Anniversary, Afghans Blame Departed US Forces For Their Woes

Kabul: War weary residents of Kabul expressed anger and feelings of betrayal by the United States, as the world marked the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks that prompted a US invasion of Afghanistan and the toppling of its Taliban rulers.

After a two-decade occupation, US forces abruptly pulled out of Afghanistan last month, triggering the collapse of its Western-backed government and the Taliban's dramatic return to power.

"The misfortunes we are currently experiencing are because of America," said Abdul Waris, a Kabul resident. Some of the mostly young men who spoke to Reuters complained that US forces had not tried to help the Afghan people. "After the September 11 events took place, the Americans were in our country for 20 years for their own benefit," said Jalil Ahmad.

"They took the benefits they had in mind for 20 years while we did not get any benefit from them. They have left the country in a state of confusion."

227 Activists Killed in 2020: Global Witness

BOGOTA: Last year was the most dangerous on record for people defending their land and the environment for biodiversity and climate reasons, with the non-profit entity Global Witness counting at least 227 murdered environmentalists. Over half the attacks were in Colombia, Mexico and the Philippines, according to its Last Line of Defence report.

FDA Panel Rejects Booster Proposal

Washington: An influential advisory panel in the US rejected a plan to offer the Pfizer vaccine's booster shots against Covid-19 to most Americans, dealing a blow to President Joe Biden's efforts to shore up people's protection

amid the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus.

The vote by the committee of outside experts assembled by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was 16-2, with members expressing frustration that Pfizer provided little data on the safety of extra doses. Many also raised doubts about the value of mass boosters. The panel, however, voted in favour of authorising Pfizer vaccine boosters for everyone aged 65 and above, as well as for people at high risk of developing severe Covid-19.

The decisions came after a day-long meeting full of data presentations and at times charged debate that was convened by the FDA.

India Will Stand by Afghans as it Has in Past: Jaishankar

New Delhi: India reiterated its commitment to stand by the people of Afghanistan and called for "non-discriminatory" and direct distribution of humanitarian assistance through the UN at a time when the war-torn country is going through a critical phase.

Addressing a high-level meeting on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, external affairs minister S Jaishankar underlined the need for humanitarian assistance providers to be given "unimpeded, unrestricted and direct access" to the country.

"Once relief materials reach that country, the world will naturally expect a non-discriminatory distribution of humanitarian assistance across all sections of the Afghan society. Only the United Nations has the capacity to monitor such endeavours and reassure donors," he said. "Today, I wish to underline that in the face of a grave emerging situation, India is willing to stand by the Afghan people, just as in the past," he added. ■

OUR REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD

Britain	:	Mr. Akram Nadwi O.C.I.S.St. Cross College Oxford Ox 1 3 TU (UK)
Dubai	:	Mohammad Khalid Kanpuri P.O. Box No. 12772 Dubai U.A.E.
Pakistan	:	Mr. Ataullah Sector A-50, Near SAU Qrs. Karachi 31 (Pakistan)
Qatar	:	Dr. Aftab Alam Nadwi P.O. Box No. 1513 Doha, Qatar
Saudi Arabia	:	Mr. Zia Abdullah Nadwi Director Al Waha International School P.B.No. 12491 Jeddah, Pin-21473 (K.S.A.)
South Africa	:	Mr. M. Yahaya Sallo Nadwi P.O. Box No. 388 Vereninging, (South Africa)
U.S.A.	:	Dr. A. M. Siddiqui 98-Conklin Ave. Woodmere, New York 11598