



NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2013



**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute
of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS) Kolkata**

(AN AUTONOMOUS BODY UNDER THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)



Arpita, Diloram and Anita with the Director and members of the Institute of Central Asian Studies, Samarkand



Address by the Governor of West Bengal, Shri M. K. Narayanan



Uzbek musicians at the Asia Perspectives Seminar in March



International seminar in Bangladesh



Conference on Buddhism



Fieldtrip by Suchandana Chatterjee to Astana, Kazakhstan, August 2013

वेणु राजामणि
राष्ट्रपति के प्रेस सचिव

Venu Rajamony
Press Secretary to the President



राष्ट्रपति सचिवालय,
राष्ट्रपति भवन,
नई दिल्ली - 110004

President's Secretariat,
Rashtrapati Bhavan,
New Delhi - 110004



MESSAGE

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, is happy to know that the MAKAIAS Newsletter is being brought out by the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata to commemorate the 125th Birth Anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on November 11, 2013.

The President extends his warm greetings and felicitations to all those associated with the Institute and sends his best wishes for their future endeavours.

Press Secretary to the President



M. K. Narayanan
GOVERNOR OF WEST BENGAL



RAJ BHAVAN
KOLKATA 700 062



October 10, 2013

I am glad to learn that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies is going to revive its Newsletter and launch it on 11th November, 2013 to mark the 125th Birth Anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

I wish the publication all success.


M. K. Narayanan

चन्द्रेश कुमारी कटोच
CHANDRESH KUMARI KATOCH



संस्कृति मंत्री
भारत सरकार
शास्त्री भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001
Minister of Culture
Government of India
Shastri Bhawan New Delhi-110001

28 OCT 2013



MESSAGE

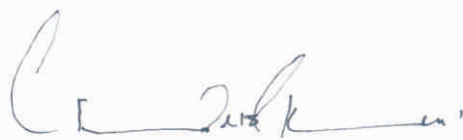
I am happy to know that the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies is celebrating the 125th Birth Anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on 11-13th November 2013 at Kolkata.

Maulana Saheb was a freedom fighter, scholar, a great secular and national leader of our Country. His contribution as India's first education minister in the fields of art, culture, and science has been immense.

The International Conference on **"Understanding the Trajectories of the Contemporary Islam"** and an International Symposium on **"Contextualizing Maulana Azad for Understanding Contemporary Political Islam"** being organised by MAKAIAS on this occasion will lead to a better understanding of Maulana Saheb's ideals and principles.

I am also happy to know that the **MAKAIAS Newsletter** is being re-launched on this occasion. The regular updates of the research undertaken on Central Asia, Afghanistan, South and South-east Asia as well as India's Northeast will be of great interest to not only students of social, cultural and strategic studies and but also for the policy makers.

I convey my best wishes.



(CHANDRESH KUMARI KATOCH)



Chairman presenting books to The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee

MESSAGE

It is appropriate that MAKAIAS Newsletter is being re-launched on the occasion of 125th Birth Anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Maulana Azad stood shoulder to shoulder with other leaders of the Congress and fought for India's freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. But his vision went beyond the attainment of freedom. He knew in the core of his being that freedom would avail little, if it did not lead to unity among people. India's future destiny with its composite culture was as a modern and progressive nation. Gandhi-Azad-Nehru can be called the trinity of Indian secularism.

Azad's intellectual, political, cultural, literary and religious contributions to modern India have not been fully appreciated. Maulana's ideas have made signal contribution to India becoming a sovereign, secular, democratic republic. Today's generations need to recall these ideas to understand the progress of the country.

I am sure MAKAIAS Newsletters will be able to disseminate knowledge and information about the life and work of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as well as socio-economic and political developments in Asian countries in the present changing world.

1 November 2013



SITARAM SHARMA
CHAIRMAN, Executive Council
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies



Editorial

On the Relaunch of the MAKAIAS Newsletter

Today marks the 125th Birth Anniversary of Maulana Azad, an auspicious occasion to relaunch the Institute newsletter, discontinued now for several years.

While browsing through the older issues, one is overtaken by a wistful sense of nostalgia; but one also realizes that the need for a regular collaborative, informative periodical which comments on issues as they occur, is still very much alive. We missed our newsletter, and are happy to have it back in its new avatar.

Just to update you, the Institute scholars have for several years been engaged in research on Asia. The subjects have been varied, ranging from terrorism to democracy, from border movements to ethnicity, from new social movements to Sufism and more. While strategic issues continue to dominate the political narratives in India and elsewhere, there are significant aspects that lie outside the domain of conventional international studies. These dimensions are increasingly making space within state-to-state interactions and are often broadly referred to as the 'cultural dynamics'. Research at the Institute is increasingly filling the gap in such studies and attempting to straddle the geo-strategic and politico-cultural dimensions of international and area studies. The research projects examine the complexity of the intertwined relationships between politics, culture and religion and have generated debates and added to the prevalent political discourse. The Institute attempts to combine interdisciplinary perspectives with area knowledge of Asia to produce a body of work that traverses security questions, political and economic paradigms and cultural issues.

Apart from our regular international and national conferences, the Institute also hosts guest lectures by eminent scholars. The fellows' seminars have assumed a periodicity and are attended by subject experts who contribute their considerable experience by way of comments and feedback. The Institute has an extensive variety of publications in the form of books, monographs, and reports

derived from its research and academic activities.

The quarterly newsletter will be covering the major developments within the Institute for that period. It will feature commentaries and short essays as well as book reviews to offer a glimpse of the research that is being undertaken by the fellows. That apart, every quarter we would like to capture some glimpses of the academic activities in the Institute - the lectures, the seminars and conferences, the field trips. We shall also share some snippets from our lives in MAKAIAS - anecdotes and photographs from field trips and travels, achievements of our researchers and staff, and mention of those who have joined or left us.

This issue has a commentary on Maulana Azad and the concept of Tauheed, which is a continuation of the research being undertaken on the Maulana and his philosophy and political thoughts. As is well known, Maulana Azad, in addition to being a national leader and a politician, was a major scholar, and his commentary on the Quran is considered to be one of the most authoritative modern works on the subject. The other essays included here talk about the fluid political situation in Kazakhstan; the process of democratisation undertaken by the Erdogan-led government in Turkey; the scheduled Afghanistan Presidential election, critical for the stability of the state and the region; and popular protests in Syria against the torture of students who had put up anti-government graffiti, reflecting the political uncertainty that has afflicted Syria for decades. India's northeast is a core focus of research at the Institute, and the article on culture, identity and the State underscores the complex issues of socio-cultural dynamics.

I look forward to your suggestions and inputs as we attempt to develop this newsletter into a rewarding reading experience that is both interesting and useful.

Dr Sreeradha Datta
Director

Maulana and the Concept of Tauheed

Dr. Rafique Anwar

The basis of Islam as well as Sufism is the realization of Tauheed or The Oneness of Existence in its true sense. And this realization is the key to attaining the state of Islam, that is: Peace acquired through total submission to the Will of The Absolute Being denoted by the name Allah, which is the innermost reality of human beings. The key message of this Universal Deen is 'We are all One in Essence, We are all One at Heart', the central point in the attainment of Tauheed. Upon fulfillment of this realization we will be on the path leading to ultimate peace although we have to undergo many challenges, much opposition, and a range of diverse experiences before we reach this stage of Tauheed. This realization teaches us to see unity in diversity, and one in multiplicity.

Due to Maulana Azad's political profile, perhaps his contemporaries grudged him due recognition for his achievements in the spheres of scholarship, literary and artistic endeavour and humanity. Many books on Maulana have been published; he is still held in esteem throughout India, but largely as an important leader of the Independence struggle. His accomplishments in this field have been fairly well researched and documented. However, the Sufi-like qualities of Maulana's personality still remain unexplored. These are the very qualities which made the Maulana a genuine leader, an accomplished scholar, a trendsetting journalist, a true intellectual, an independent interpreter of the Quran, and above all, a simple human being who, throughout his life, tried to follow 'Siratul Mustaqim' or 'the straight path' in the language of the Quran.

With all his wonderful scholarship, his broad perceptions and his deep sympathy, the Maulana devoted his life to the task of preparing the way for his people to progress. Indeed, in his own person and life he affected a synthesis between all the conflicting social and religious doctrines of the times and gave to the world the seeds of a Universal Solution. And the fundamental tenet of

this synthesis was his vision of a perfect and universal Humanity - the key to Sufism.

As the Quran clearly says, the whole of creation is the manifestation of the One and Only Creator denoted by Allah. Each and every constituent of this creation exists or lives with His breath; and man is 'Ashraful Makhluqat' or 'Greatest of all the creations'. The Omnipotent Power that created the universe is referred to as Allah, both in the Quran as well as in Deen Islam. The Supreme Being bestowed everything which exists in the universe with the attributes of the qualities of His names. All the qualities that each one of us possesses come from the meanings contained in the name Allah. In other words, for a human being to be a 'Khalifa' or a caliph in this world would mean that the meanings contained within the 99 names of Allah become manifest in that person, with no gender discrimination. This means that both men and women are equal. All human beings in their innate nature (Fitrah) have the capacity to actualize the meanings of the 99 names of Allah in their lives, which needs a perfect balance between materialism and spiritualism. In this sense those who actualize the essence of 99 names of Allah in the course of living their lives are perfect human beings. This earns them the title Ashraful Makhluqat or Divine Caliph or Wali or Sufi. The perfect way to achieve this perfection in humanity is called Sufism. The entire body of spiritual practices known as 'Ibadah' is for the person to actualize the potent wishes of his true self (Haqiqah) as much as his native or inborn capacity (Fitrah) allows him, which his Originator (Fatir) bestowed on him and facilitated.

Maulana achieved success to a great extent in bringing about the balance between materialism and spiritualism in his life. This is the reason why we find multiple personalities in him. Sometimes we find in him a practical politician, sometimes an all-inclusive patriot, sometimes a visionary scholar, sometimes a far-sighted leader, sometimes a dutiful divine servant full of patience, sometimes an ordinary human being. We may see all these traits as the signs of Sufism in Maulana's personality.

In almost all of his important works I find Maulana

expressing his point of view just like a Sufi or a true human being in search of the Truth of Life. Whether it be his magnum opus *Tarjumanul Quran*, or his collection of letters *Ghubar-i-Khateer*, or his memoir *Tazkira*, or his glorious tribute to one of India's great Sufi masters and poets Shaheed Sarmad, or his meditative and reflective editorials in *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, or his meticulous and wistful speeches on different occasions, everywhere I find Sufistic qualities in him. His introduction to *Rubayyat-i-Sarmad* which he made while still in his teens, is a touching and truthful description of the relationship between a Bandah or a true servant in the language of Islam, or a lover in the language of Sufism and his Khuda or Lord in the language of Islam, or beloved in the language of Sufism.

I would like to base my arguments here on, and to quote from, Maulana's *The Rubayyat of Sarmad* (trans. Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, The Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1991). Every paragraph he wrote in this book is an expression of how passionately Maulana was in love with Sufism, to which he gave the name of 'Sarmad's faith'. Maulana firmly believes that it is love alone that brings about creation, and that it is love alone through which creation achieves nearness to the Creator. He expresses this realization thus:

'No one is worthy of being called human unless he has crossed the rubicon of love. He who has not experienced the intensity of desire or deluge of tears is less than human. When the ascetic in the mosque bows his head in Namaaz, despite all his piety and devotion, he cannot help enjoying thoughts of the smiling Houries and Ghilmaans of paradise. Even the Super-ascetics who seek the truth in the recesses of mosques are not free from these alluring images.

'... Unless the heart has been drenched in the potion of pain, it is like a piece of ice which has been seen melting, but no one has ever seen it engulfed in flames. But the human heart is so entangled in the business of life, that unless it is struck a lethal blow, it cannot disentangle itself from this commerce. The bee that homes its way to the honeycomb, gets so firmly stuck that it has to be pulled out before it can fly away. Man, too, is

stuck, unless he receives a massive jolt!

'... O you lovers of beauty, why wait for the unveiling? Isn't the beauty of the veil sufficient? The blind prophet Yaqub's eyes did not need Yusuf to appear before their sightless orbs to regain their light. His vision was restored the moment perfume from Yusuf's garment's wafted towards his nose. The Quran says:

Inni laajudo reha Yusufu laula an tufannidun

I do indeed scent the presence of Yusuf;

Nay, think me not a dotard. (Quran S XI: 94)'

With reference to the depiction of Sufi Sarmad's life-sketch, Maulana brought in the contemporary political and social conditions prevalent in Mughal India. In the course of his portrayal of the state of affairs - spiritual as well as material - Maulana, on the one hand, defines the concept of Kufr or polytheism vis-a-vis Islam, and on the other hand describes the divine attributes manifested in the Sufi-like personality of Dara Shikoh. Particularly he points out the attribute of 'humility' in the personality of Dara Shikoh. In Sufism 'humility' has deep significance. The Quran says that three basic qualities have to exist in the heart of the seeker. The first is Khushu or humility. The second is Karamat or charity, sharing, to experience the joy of giving. And the third is Sidq or truthfulness, authenticity. That is, recognizing that which we are. These are the three pillars of Sufism. Humility or Khushu refers to a man who has understood all the ways of the ego, such that the ego has disappeared.

So thus spoke Maulana:

'From his early years Dara displayed the attributes of a Darvish. He always kept company with philosophers and Sufis. His writings indicate that the author was a man of excellent taste. The overwhelming proof of his taste is that in pursuing his goal he lost the distinction between the temple and mosque. The humility with which he met the Muslim divines was matched by the devotion with which he bowed his head before the Hindu saints and sadhus. Who can deny the purity of this principle? Because in this exalted state of mind, if one can still distinguish between Kufr and Islam then what is the difference between blindness and

vision? The moth should seek the flame. If it is desirous of the lamp which is lit only in the mosque, its desire for self immolation is not complete.'

Maulana portrays the concept of Tauheed i.e. Oneness, the ultimate goal of the human existence, in a very vivid and touching way by the example of how Sufi Master Sarmad attained it. Had Maulana not known the Sufistic attributes and spiritual awareness of reaching out to the Absolute Truth, how could have he known the secret of Tauheed, or how could have he explained it with such simplicity? Maulana also says that dogmatism and 'Mullahism' should not have any place in religion. He writes,

'The Ulema gave their verdict. This is blatant kufr, they declared. If he does not repent and say 'Tauba' (I regret), he deserves nothing less than execution. These godly men of worldly ways did not understand that Sarmad was far above their pedantic discussions of kufr and faith. Self impressed with their writs of execution, they often climbed on the pulpit of their mosques or madrassas, and thought about the heights to which they had risen and still aspired to rise. But Sarmad had reached the pinnacle of love from where the walls of the mosque and the temple are seen standing face to face. Here the insignias of kufr and faith are hoisted simultaneously.

'... Sarmad had honestly spoken his state of mind. Those who do not believe in blind faith (this absence of passive acceptance is the real search for truth) want to eye-witness an event before offering their agreement. To see the Ultimate Reality one must wager nothing less than one's life, a state which Sarmad had not reached so far. Therefore, how could he say 'It is He' (Illallah)? All travelers on this route have to pass this stage of the journey. Sarmad's crime was that what others drank secretly, he took to his lips at the public square.

'... When Sarmad refused to say tauba, the Ulema readily gave their fatwa. The next day he was taken to the scaffold.

'... He was so deeply involved in his communion with God that he looked up only once. That moment occurred when his executioner moved

forward flashing his sword. He is said to have smiled, looked straight into his executioner's eyes, and spoken the following words:

Come

O come, I implore you!

In whatever guise you come

I know you well.

'... as he spoke these lines, he placed his neck under the executioner's sword, and surrendered his life to his creator.'

And in this way he (Sarmad) gave witness to Kalimatush-Shahdah (Words of Witness), another name of Kalimatut-Tauheed (Words of Oneness). By crossing over the boundaries of Materialism and Spiritualism (Dualism) he reached the valley of Oneness. Actually, the word 'Shaheed', which is widely used in the Indian sub-continent, has come from the root 'shahda' or witness. The actual meaning of the word 'Shaheed' is 'one who gives witness to the Oneness of Existence' (there is none except the existence of Allah). Maulana hints at this when he says:

'... Sarmad had never recited the Kalima beyond the first two syllables (La-Ilaha). But after his martyrdom people heard from his severed head the sound of the remaining two syllables 'Illallah' recited thrice.'

This description, I feel, makes it clear what class of Divine Consciousness Maulana espoused in his life. I would like to conclude with a couplet by the Kolkata Sufi master Syed Ameer Ali Chishti, who was a contemporary of Maulana's:

'Du-yee ra door kun noor-e-khuda babeen

Na dar hars wa hawa khud ra mubtalaa babeen

Remove the multiplicity and see the Divine Illumination (Noor)

Do not see yourself entangled in hankering and lust.'

(*Sirajul Ma'rifat*, Syed Ameer Ali Chishti, Kolkata 1319 AH, p. 11).

The Kazakh Way

Suchandana Chatterjee



Khan Shatyr, a giant transparent tent in Astana

The Kazakh state is not as robust as it appears this is the West's assessment about a country that has long been viewed from the outside as the most prosperous and stable in a region widely regarded as fragile and dysfunctional. The possession of wealth by a few sections of society in Almaty and Astana and the multi-billion dollar energy contracts - increasingly with China - do not tell the entire story. There is a multitude of challenges which hardly surface in the media.

The oft repeated question, however, is about a post-Nazarbayev regime. Kazakhstan seems to be waiting for change with an ageing and ailing authoritarian leader with no designated successor, labour unrest, Islamist resurgence, corruption and a state apparatus that has time and again been forced to contend with unforgiving partners like Russia and Uzbekistan. The expectation of change emerges from a perception that Kazakhstan's present regime model is open for business but closed to reform. The Zhanaozen upsurge of 16 December 2011 and the on-going trials of the accused have raised questions about the legality of the procedures (prosecutors also challenging the

over reaction of the police against the demonstrators and against local government officials and oil company magnates for their abuse of authority). Though the media tried hard with negative reporting about the incident leading to enormous speculation about the survival of the regime, the Kazakhs in general, especially in the northern cities, have not lost faith in the performance of their leader. Opinions about a resilient and stable government were expressed on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Kazakhstan's capital, Astana. July 6, marked as Astana Day was celebrated in 2013 as national holiday. During the celebrations, people were in a jubilant mood, celebrating the city's new architecture and praising the grand projects of the President.

The Kazakh state seems undeterred by wide media coverage about state repression and growing emphasis on the insider-outsider syndrome or the ethnic nation-civic nation trajectory that talks of a divide between ethnic Kazakhs and Kazakhstanis belonging to non-Kazakh ethnic origins. The media reported clashes that erupted much earlier, i.e. in 2006-07 between (a) Kazakhs and Kurds and (b) Kazakhs and Uyghurs in the Atyrau blast. Sensitive slogans like 'your country but my land' voiced by the Uyghurs became the media's punchline. The ethnic bias of the Kazakh media was revealed in such headlines as: 'How Can I Call Someone a Brother If He Doesn't Even Know How to Say Salt and Bread in Kazakh?' or 'Atyrau is Choking from Chinese' or 'Where is Your Honour, Kazakh?' Such reportage on ethnic discrimination was a sensitive matter. The sensitivity of the issue became evident in small issues like a billiard game fight that erupted into mob lynching of a family of Chechen origin in the village of Malovodnoe in the southeastern districts of Almaty in 2007. The unpleasant memory of Malovodnoe reappeared during the Boston marathon bombing case of April 2013 that revealed the Tsarnaev brothers' Kazakhstan link. For most analysts, in such situations, the government should deal with symptoms of conflict. Some even argued strongly that conscious efforts should be made to prevent conflict. Resilience, according to public opinion, mattered most.

The image of strong governance was proved by reports about the arrest of Mukhtar Ablyazhov, the oligarch who left his post as Energy Minister and became a prominent opponent of President Nazarbayev. Ablyazhov's arrest for fraud charges worth 2.6 billion pounds was carried out at the behest of a Ukrainian warrant and in the absence of an extradition treaty between France and Kazakhstan. The sensational nature of the arrest of the billionaire Kazakh banker on foreign soil does speak a lot about the ways in which offenders are punished by the State. There were also other controversies over certain Presidential decisions about which the State was least bothered. President Nazarbayev honoured the country's two daughters i.e. the two weightlifters, allegedly of Dungan background, who represented Kazakhstan in the London Olympics of 2012. The reason for the controversy about these 'imported Olympic champions' was as follows: both of them were Dungans (a Chinese ethnic group) who moved to Kazakhstan in 2008 with promises of the Kazakh government's financial backing as well as social status. It is almost an open secret that the weightlifters were among the chosen few who were trained by the Kazakh training school - but hardly anybody questioned the President's decision to honour the winners.

In 2013, the Kazakh government has come full circle with its economic integration programme (after signing the Eurasian Customs Union with Russia and Belarus in 2012) allowing her as well as her neighbours to resume their status as the pinheads of global commerce. Nazarbayev recently spoke about his country's target of reaching self-sustainability by the year 2050. Astana was the September venue of a business forum for emerging markets where the most effective measures of development were discussed. Nazarbayev was a prominent voice in the G20 summit of emerging nations in St. Petersburg where he expressed his opinions about a global financial architecture. The G20 summit also provided the platform for China-Kazakhstan pipeline deals. These pipelines, built jointly by the Chinese and the Kazakhs, are to connect the vast Central Asia-China pipeline in Turkmenistan that will distribute gas all the way to China's coastal

cities. Such mutual interests seemed to be on the agenda during the Chinese President Xi Jinping's first visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013. Priority was given to the commercial production in Kashagan oilfield. Showcased as the world's biggest oil find in decades, Kashagan is expected to boost the economic image of Kazakhstan with an annual growth rate of 7 percent.

The Kazakhs have woken up to dreams of a new Silk Road, an ambitious \$7 billion project that will connect China and Western Europe along a 1,700 mile highway through the north of Kazakhstan. Prominent aid agencies like the ADB, World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency are expected to fund major sectors of this trade corridor, which, it is hoped will upgrade the northern route of the Silk Road that shall connect southern towns like Kyzyl Orda and Shymkent with northern towns like Aralsk. This overland route is being resurrected as a passage for transporting a special item i.e. several million laptop computers and accessories made each year in China and bound for customers in European cities like London, Paris, Berlin and Rome. Since 2011, Hewlett Packard, the Silicon Valley electronics company, has shipped laptops and accessories to stores in Europe via express trains across Central Asia. This route has become a major transportation route for freight trains, some of which also belong to the Chinese. The Kazakhstan rail initiative has spurred regional competition, especially from the Russians. Russia is seriously contemplating improved rail links to China, notably through upgradation of the Trans Siberian railroad. The railroad option is proving to be extremely beneficial for China and President Nazarbayev has also showcased this route as the new Silk Road. To the western traveller, this is a twisting and threatening route on which the Baikonur space satellite zone is located. To the Kazakhs, this is a route of shining opportunities, as the expectation is that job opportunities will increase with cafes and hotels built along the road.

Gezi Park and the "Turkish Spring"

Anita Sengupta



The lady in red symbolized the arbitrariness of state action

Events in Turkey unfolded when a call went out on 28 May 2013 for people to defend the Taksim Gezi Park against bulldozers that had appeared overnight to uproot trees as a first step towards replacing the park with a reconstruction of the historic Taksim Military Barracks demolished in 1940. The initial alert came from Taksim Solidarity, an umbrella platform that had been organized to spearhead movements against urban transformation projects that characterize the urban policy of the ruling AKP (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi or Justice and Development Party). This includes environmentally destructive infrastructural projects like the third Bosphorus Bridge and the Istanbul Canal and the privatization of formerly public spaces like the Gezi Park. What began with a small group of people keeping watch over the trees rapidly grew into round-the-clock occupation of the park with the number of people increasing every day. When police used tear-gas and water cannons on the occupants and set up barricades to keep them out, there was a wave of protest that was replicated in 67 cities from Ankara to Izmir, Adana and Hatay.

The makeup and content of the protests have varied widely from city to city with different slogans and symbols. The millions of people who

joined in the movement were, however, united by two broad concerns; a sense of frustration with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his party's approach to governance on a range of issues; and anger at the violent response of the police (symbolized by the photograph of the lady in red) and failure of mainstream Turkish media to cover it. The protests have involved the participation of people from every ideological position in Turkish politics except for the supporters of the AKP themselves. The majority were middle class and secular, but the participation of working class people, practising Muslims and ethnic and religious minorities belies any attempt to characterize this movement as 'being organized by extremist elements' and lacking public support, as claimed by Erdogan. The positions and goals of the people participating in the demonstrations were diverse and sometimes incompatible, but the common spirit of resistance was undeniable. The significance of the movement to 'take back' the public space, the alignment of dissent and the slogans built around the threatened trees are being extensively debated in the social media, though it remains problematic to predict what kinds of possibilities will emerge out of the movement. However, what remains undeniable is that the rhetoric of the Turkish Model, as an ideal for the Middle East in the post Arab Spring era, will be reconsidered as Turkey confronts its own 'Spring'.

In the aftermath of the events in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries in February-March 2011, expectations were raised that Turkey would serve as a moderate model that would be emulated by these states. There was speculation that the 'Turkish Model' was being studied by those seeking reform and a change of regime in Egypt. Projection of the model as 'moderate' and 'useful' was made from divergent viewpoints and by actors with a very varied understanding of the model. It was proposed by the West as a useful alternative strategy in the face of the spectre of the success of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, stated that the 'moderation' of the Turkish AKP represented a model for the Egyptian Islamic Movement. This was followed by the comment of

Namik Tan, the Turkish Ambassador in Washington, that Turkey was unique in the Muslim world and could be an 'inspiration' for the Middle Eastern countries. Turkey became hugely popular during the Tahrir demonstrations in Egypt, supported by the fact that Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul publicly urged the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to resign. In fact Erdogan's call to Mubarak to resign was broadcast live throughout the Arab world and his speech at Tahrir Square strengthened his image as a leader. Turkey's attack on Israel over the last two years had made Erdogan the most popular leader on the 'Arab streets' and there is a renewed Turkish interest in its Middle Eastern neighbourhood.

Turkey's position, of course has not been without criticism. It has been noted that Turkey's main aim has been to improve relations with countries in the Middle East. It has pursued a policy of 'zero-problems' with neighbouring countries through improving dialogue and commercial ties and acting as a mediator. As a result Turkey's foreign policy has prioritized rapprochement in its neighbourhood, and support for human rights and 'democracy' has not been unconditional. For instance, it is being argued that the Turkish Prime Minister's celebration of democracy in Egypt lacks credibility, since the Turkish leadership had displayed no concern for democratic reform when mass protests were suppressed in Iran after the elections in 2009. The concern seems to be expressed in cases where the Islamists are in opposition, contrary to expectations of a 'democratic' pulse as the principle motivating factor. Similarly, Turkey has abstained from publicly condemning Colonel Qaddafi's position and has been opposed to the imposition of sanctions and military measures. Turkey's position in Libya is rooted in its significant investments in the country and the fact that a large number of Turkish citizens are working and doing business in Libya. The expanding domestic economic interests and regional dynamism represented by business constituencies that support the ruling AKP has seen the emergence of new Anatolian businesses competing against the traditional metropolitan businesses in western Turkey. These have acted as strong advocates for further Turkish expansion

into the Middle Eastern rather than European markets. And, it has been noted, Turkey was mindful of these interests and investments when Ankara's stand towards Libya was formulated.

However, it was argued that irrespective of the country's record of support for democracy abroad, Turkey constituted a model due to its own democratic record and level of economic success in recent years. The representation of Turkey as a model of democracy within Islam is not new. The Bush administration presented Turkey as a model within the framework of the Greater Middle East initiative. This image is supported by the AKP which portrays itself as a 'conservative democratic' party which is politically and economically liberal while being sensitive to certain societal values and traditions. There has been a tendency to read the current experiment in Turkey as the successful political integration of an Islamic movement within democracy. The political opposition within Turkey, however, disputes this image and there has been debate on the 'moderation' of the AKP regime, particularly with the arrest and conviction of a large number of individuals in what is termed as the 'Ergenekon' affair. This brought into question Turkey's commitment to 'democratic ideals', a commitment that is being increasingly stressed upon by the European Union.

There has also been, for some time, frustration about the government's stand on issues ranging from property development and media rights to the role of religion and access to alcohol, all of which is viewed as attempts to impose conservative values on a secular society. The recent events, and the refusal of the Prime Minister to accept the legitimacy of the grievances, have strengthened these concerns.

It is still too early to predict what kind of alternatives will emerge or what impact the events will have on the forthcoming local and general elections, the presidential elections, the new constitution process, the proposed presidential system, the Kurdish initiative, domestic calculations and the balance of political parties and the economy in Turkey. The democratization package offered by Erdogan on 30 September 2013, which was proclaimed as a 'new and decisive

phase in the Turkish democratization process', reflects caution and sensitivity about a possible Turkish nationalist backlash in the face of municipal and presidential elections next year. The generally negative reception of the package from key opposition groups, including the Kurds, highlights deeper social problems that the reforms did not address.

The Arab Spring: The Syrian Chapter

Priya Singh



An Anti-regime rally at Hama in Syria

The North African and Middle Eastern uprisings were, broadly speaking, triggered by varying combinations of political authoritarianism, economic deprivation and social disintegration, which made people in those countries feel increasingly marginalised, powerless, disrespected and humiliated. Even if they are linked to the wider processes of global politics and economics, these are specific local dynamics that cannot be simply seen as a direct result of imperialism and globalisation. The Arab revolutions, since their beginning, were revolutions without specific promises and assertions. They were revolutions purportedly against oppression and injustice more than they were revolutions aimed at implementing premeditated programmes and ideas. To quote Walter Benjamin, these are 'revolutions nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than

that of liberated grandchildren.' Possibly, in this sense, a revolution like the one which has emerged in Syria has not occurred in the other Arab countries. The revolutionaries of Syria appear in this game to be actual subalterns: those who do not have a voice and who cannot communicate with the Western audience.

Syria is torn between the ruling Alawites, an offshoot of the Shia sect [albeit with marked dissimilarities, to the extent that each does not accept the other as a faith/religion]; and the majority (76%) Sunni population. Since 1970, Hafez al-Assad and his regime have deftly used religious and ethnic sects and sectarianism in Syria as well as Lebanon to consolidate their rule, fuelling sectarian tensions but keeping them under sufficient control so as to justify the 'need' for this rule: otherwise 'things would get out of control and the country would descend into civil war.' The term 'politics of sectarian tension' best describes this policy. Hafez al-Assad's son and successor, Bashar al-Assad, conformed to the same principle of projecting a tolerant and modernizing image of the Ba'athist regime. His supposed 'modernization' programme was implemented in 2000. His economic restructuring, celebrated in the West as much needed 'reforms', was, according to the opposition groups in Syria, carried out through a Mafia-like network of high ranking security officers in collaboration with big businessmen, and was largely concentrated in and benefited the traditional bourgeois urban centres. Moreover, economic liberalisation was not accompanied by the political liberalisation that could have made these reforms more acceptable to the people at large, except for a brief period of political freedom in 2000-2001, known as the 'Damascus Spring', which was quickly and ruthlessly suppressed when the regime realised that excessive freedom may destabilise its rule.

The present mass protests in Syria, which broke out in March 2011, started and remained, for quite a few months into the revolution, largely confined to marginalised, neglected regions such as a Dar'a, Idlib, Deir-al Zor, al-Raqqa, the poor slums and suburbs of Damascus. Apart from a few relatively small solidarity demonstrations, big urban centres (Damascus, Aleppo) did not move on a mass scale

for a while. This was partly due to the reluctance of the urban middle classes to side with the revolution because they believed that the regime would overcome the 'crisis,' so it was safer for their own interests to stay on the regime's side or remain silent. In contrast, the marginalization, negligence, deprivation and humiliation in the rural areas had reached such an extent that they did not have much more to lose. Perhaps this is what distinguished the Syrian uprising from the (first) Egyptian revolution. For the moment, it is actually remarkable to see the mercantile classes of Damascus still aligning with the government there, even as a lesser evil. It is also astounding to watch the Syrian army engaged in a brutal war against a section of its own people, and not collapsing under the colossal psychological pressure that such conflicts usually create. There have been some cracks and a few defections, but not many. The centre has held on for more than thirty months.

The threat of a military strike on Syria has not aroused the enthusiasm of many. It has succeeded, however, in bringing the Syrian revolution to the negotiation table. Until now, Syria has been notably absent from the list of priorities on the Western agenda on both the left and the right, apparently of little interest to governments and public opinion alike. For almost two and a half years, the Syrian revolution did not manage to drive Western governments to push for an end to the tragic spiral of events. As long as the opposed parties in the Syrian conflict lacked the capability and volition to strengthen Western interests in the region, why make the investment of interference? That appeared to be the essence of General Martin Dempsey's comments on the Syrian situation two days before the 21 August 2013 Ghouta massacre, the chemical attacks on ordinary citizens that shocked the world. Such indifference, however, was not exclusive to the governments of the United States and European countries. Public opinion lacked interest in the tens of thousands of deaths as well as the destruction of cities and villages. It was not until death in Syria crossed one of the West's red lines (evidence of the use of chemical weapons) that the people in Syria became a matter deserving of the West's interest. At that point, the warships moved into position.

Meanwhile, anti-war sentiments and commentary opposed to Western military intervention rose against them.

The United Nations has been pressing for the Geneva II Plan, which calls for a ceasefire, the formation of a transitional government and elections. The Assad regime's alleged use of chemical weapons has complicated matters as Russia, in September 2013, categorically stated that the so-called Geneva II Talks would be 'put off for a long time, if not forever' if the United States launched punitive military action against Syria. However, in view of the recent turn of events, with the Assad regime's willingness to destroy chemical weapons and the US and Russia being on the same page as regards this issue, the U.N. Arab League peace envoy Lakhdar Brahimi on 6 October 2013 urged all parties of the Syrian conflict to engage in peace talks 'without pre-conditions', adding that he hoped negotiations could take place in Geneva by mid-November. The Russians support President Bashar al-Assad's regime primarily because his forces are slaying Islamist extremists, whom Russia considers to be one of its most dangerous adversaries, in the process playing down the fact that President Assad's Russian-made weapons may also be killing innocent civilians, and consequently breeding more jihadis. The US, in contrast, wants to see President Assad go but is reluctant to become involved militarily. Sensing this, Russia has sought to engage the US on Syria's chemical disarmament and a wider political settlement of the crisis.

Analysts contend that this contest is not so much about Syria as about achieving President Putin's far-reaching goal in foreign affairs: restoring equality to the US-Russia relationship. The US is unlikely to accept Russia as an equal, but Russia will not settle for less, making US-Russia co operation a hard-fought act. Today, Syria is a mere playground in this greater game. The Syrian situation also highlights some of China's primary concerns vis-a-vis the Arab Spring, namely, political instability, Islamist resurgence and potential disintegration of the country. China is mainly concerned with state sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Syria as well as the possible ramifications for issues such as

Tibet, the Taiwan Strait or Xinjiang. Expressing preference for any of the contesting groups is not an option available to China. Therefore, its leaders have been advocating a political settlement based on a comprehensive dialogue among all parties. Meanwhile, in terms of the region itself, the Arab League appeared galvanized as a consequence of the events in Syria, whereby the 22 nation bloc, in an unprecedented move, suspended Syria's membership and imposed economic sanctions on the nation, with a call for President Assad to step down. Turkey broke with Damascus after the government crackdown intensified and has since led the demand for President Assad to step down. Relations between the two nations reached an all-time low when, in October 2012, Turkey shelled Syrian targets after a series of cross border mortar attacks. Ankara has hosted elements of the opposition and facilitated arms shipments to Syrian territory, though there now seems to be a rethink on Turkey's Syria policy. Arab governments including the Gulf States and Jordan have provided arms and financial and diplomatic support to the opposition. At the urging of the US, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have agreed to halt support to extremist groups.

Many analysts are apprehensive that the consequence of the conflict in Syria is an evolving proxy war, with a loosely knit Sunni coalition, including the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups; the Gulf States; and Turkey confronting a Shia axis comprising Syrian Alawites, Hezbollah, Iraq and Iran. For the moment the steady flood of refugees approaching nearly two million has the potential to destabilize Syria's neighbours.

Afghanistan's Presidential Elections (2014): A Critical Determinant of Stability

Dr. Arpita Basu Roy



Abdul Rab Rasul Sayyaf, a former Islamist warlord, speaks to an official of the Afghan Independent Election Commission as he registers as a candidate in next presidential elections, in Kabul, Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a few months away from its presidential elections scheduled for April 2014, in which President Hamid Karzai is required by the Afghan constitution to transfer the presidency to another elected Afghan leader - all this in an extremely volatile political environment. This presidential transition, occurring as the United States and the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) scale down their military presence, will serve as a crucial determinant of Afghanistan's long-term stability. The political transition coincides with security transition. In June, the Afghan security forces, for the first time since 2001, started to assume full responsibility for securing their country from their international allies, who are ending their combat mission by the end of 2014. Karzai is barred by the Constitution from running again, and the previous Afghan elections in 2009 and 2010 did reveal significant flaws in Afghanistan's democratic institutions. However, a sustainable peace in Afghanistan will require resolving the political crisis at the core of Afghanistan's conflict and building a more

legitimate Afghan government that is supported by a broad range of Afghan actors and is more accountable to its people. Challenges abound. This election will be one crucial determinant in creating a stronger political system in Afghanistan.

At the same time, realisation is dawning that the sacrifices of the past decade will be in vain if the country is not given sustained aid after 2014. These elections are, therefore, considered critical not only to the country's future stability but also for continued international support. The United Nations Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan, Nicholas Haysom, stressed that a key principal for the international community's approach to the country's Presidential election in 2014 is that they be 'Afghan-led and owned.' 'The elections are critical not only for domestic reasons, for reasons of establishing a legitimate government in Afghanistan and because Afghanistan needs a legitimate government, but also, critically, because the supporters of Afghanistan need elections to continue their support,' Mr Haysom said. A successful election is seen as vital to Afghanistan's stability, and American and European diplomats have warned that billions of dollars in aid will not materialize unless the vote is credible.

A series of recent developments have made Afghanistan's first major transfer of executive power since 2001 from President Hamid Karzai to his successor more probable. These include the ratification of two pieces of parliamentary legislation that established an electoral architecture for Afghanistan: the establishment of an Independent Electoral Commission to organize the elections and the floating of potential candidates to succeed President Karzai. These developments are the outcome of a concerted drive by Afghan leaders and civil society, the United States, and members of the international community, all of whom emphasised the importance of a credible election process and urged President Karzai to pass the electoral laws he had previously vetoed.

A credible, inclusive, and transparent electoral process will be one vital element in a successful political transition, but it will not be adequate to

forge a new political consensus to replace the current tattered one. That consensus, reached by a diverse set of Afghan factions but excluding the Taliban, is now so fragile (a result of years of manipulation by many Afghan government officials and their allies, perceptions of exclusion, and flawed elections in 2009 and 2010) that many fear that Afghan leaders will return to infighting as the international powers scale down their forces. In a time of declining resources, the crucial question is about how power and resources will be shared across a broader cross section of Afghan society.

It is interesting to observe that Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) announced the end of the candidate registration process for the presidential election, in which 27 individuals had filed nomination papers, before the deadline on 6 October, 2013. One of the last-minute registrants was Qayyum Karzai, a brother of the current President Hamid Karzai (Pajhwok). Prominent among those have entered the presidential race are two former foreign ministers, Abdullah Abdullah and Zalmay Rassoul; two former finance ministers, Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and Anwarul Haq Ahadi; ex-defence minister Abdul Rahim Wardak; former resistance leader and lawmaker Abdul Rasul Sayyaf; former transport minister Hamidullah Qaderi; and King Zahir Shah's grandson Sardar Mohammad Nadir Naeem. The IEC later announced that it had disqualified 16 presidential candidates due to improper documents and other violations, including dual nationalities and lacking a university degree. The disqualifications leave 10 candidates in the running, including Qayim Karzai, his brother, and Dr Abdullah Abdullah, a former foreign minister and 2009 presidential candidate.

The most controversial candidate happens to be Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, who invited Osama Bin Laden into Afghanistan in 1996, and was described by a US investigation as the mentor of the 9/11 mastermind, Khaled Sheikh Mohammed. He happens to be one of the founding fathers of the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Afghanistan in the early 1970s, going on to lead a guerrilla group financed mainly by Saudi Arabia in the war against the Soviet Union in the 1980s and



responsible for war crimes in the early 1990s. The former foreign minister, Zalmi Rassoul, a descendant of Afghanistan's royal family, also needed to turn to a former warlord clan for one of his running mates to build support, but in a historic move, his other vice-presidential nominee is the reformist governor of Bamiyan province, Habiba Sarobi, the first woman to be nominated for high office in Afghanistan. Dr Abdullah Abdullah was close to the legendary guerrilla commander Ahmad Shah Masood, who was killed in 2001, and while he has not succeeded in gaining the support of Masood's brother, who is on the ticket of the other former foreign minister Rassoul, he has wide support from other significant Afghan leaders. The last of the serious candidates to emerge was the president's brother, Qayum Karzai, a businessman, who has shown little interest in politics, and was criticised for rarely attending parliament when he was elected for one term. He, Ashraf Ghani and Zalmi Rassoul will be competing as the natural successor to President Karzai, and it is unlikely that all will still be in the race by election day next April, but it is assumed that each would exact a price for standing aside.

A report by the Voice of America noted that: "The final days of the nomination period were marked by a frenzy of intrigue as former warlords, tribal leaders, and veteran politicians formed alliances". And the New York Times described the candidates as a "professorial technocrat," an "urbane diplomat," and "a man accused of being a paedophile who was once a darling of the Central Intelligence Agency". After the IEC vets the candidates, a final list of contenders will be announced on 16 November and the official campaigning for the April election will begin in February 2014.

One of the major obstacles of the transition process is the impasse between the USA and the Karzai government. The United States and Afghanistan have been working on a Bilateral Security Agreement to determine the size and scope of any remaining U.S. troop presence, and officials involved in the negotiations say that they have reached an impasse, raising the possibility that there might be a total withdrawal of U.S.

troops at the end of next year. A possibility that the Pentagon's top military commanders had dismissed just months ago. U.S. officials were reported saying that they are preparing to suspend negotiations and would only resume them with President Hamid Karzai's successor. But given the fragility of Afghanistan's electoral system after 12 years of war, it is by no means certain when the next president would be able to take office. Any delay could sharply reduce the negotiating time before the end of 2014, when the US-led NATO combat mission here ends.

Continued international support in Afghanistan remains essential to ensuring a successful and peaceful transition process and maintaining the gains made by the international coalition. Even after more than 12 years of military intervention, the work in Afghanistan is clearly not done. The international community is often heard making a futile attempt to offer a narrative of opportunity to counter the anxiety of withdrawal, uncertainty, instability and foreign interference in Afghanistan. At a Summit held at Tokyo on 8 July, 2012, representatives from more than 70 countries and international organisations had met to discuss political and financial aid to Afghanistan from 2015-2025 and global donors collectively pledged \$16 billion in civilian aid over the next four years to help Afghanistan manage its weak economy against the promise of accountability and good governance. Yet, concerns abound about the international community's long-term commitment to Afghanistan following the transition to Afghan security in 2014. Like in the past, it would not be surprising if Afghanistan recedes from the memory of the fatigued international community.

Culture, Identity and the State: Ethnic Issues in Sikkim and Darjeeling

Nandini Bhattacharya Panda



Sonam Tserring playing a musical instrument

For last few decades, cultural politics and production of identity have been moulding the socio-political dynamic in the North Eastern and Eastern Himalayan region. The intermingling of cultural and political space in the North Eastern states has often fuelled scholarly discussions. In this short article, with specific reference to Sikkim and Darjeeling, I will discuss how 'culture' has become an integral component in the process of relocating the ethnic identity, and an instrument in the political agenda. The state of Sikkim has been recently included within the North Eastern zone by the Government of India and, for centuries, Darjeeling has been a part of the state of West Bengal. Despite having remarkable resemblance in the sphere of ethnicity and culture, as I will briefly analyse here, identity and ethnicity issues have been dealt with in a thoroughly divergent manner with different objectives in mind by the state and political leadership in Sikkim and Darjeeling. Also, the ethnic issues in these regions are inexorably linked with their depressed socio-economic status.

Briefly, Darjeeling was part of Sikkim before the British acquired the territory through a deed of grant in 1835. Part of Darjeeling (present Kalimpong sub-division) was ruled by the Bhutanese regime and the British rulers acquired

the stretch of land in 1856. The kingdom of Sikkim was also reduced to suzerain status around the same time. Subsequently, socio-political developments followed a similar pattern in which migration from the neighbouring states, especially Nepal, constituted the most significant aspect. By the end of British rule, the human geography and socio-economic scenario remained almost the same in both the territories. Sikkim was declared a separate state of the Republic of India in 1975.

The move towards demarcating a cultural space for the immigrant communities was initiated by the Nepalese communities in Darjeeling around the beginning of 20th century. The Nepalese constituted a cluster of communities who are generically and popularly called the Gorkhas which has little epistemological reference. The 'Gorkha' is a separate community with a different origin and history. The issue took the form of a language movement with a strong ethnic overtone in the structuring, improving and popularising of the Nepalese language, with prolific literary activities. The term 'Gorkhali ekarupata' (unified Gorkha identity) was coined at that period to offer homogeneity to the movement. This notion of Gorkhali nationhood, however, subsumed the cultural traits of individual ethnic groups. One may trace the ideological roots of the present Gorkhaland movement for a separate state to the paradigms of Gorkhali nationhood or unity.

The political movement started in the 1980s under the leadership of Subhas Ghising. He withdrew from the movement for a separate state, presumably due to some political arithmetic with the high command of the West Bengal state. Instead, he tried to motivate the ethnic communities in Darjeeling to submit their ethnic bio-data in order to obtain their scheduled tribe status, thereby kindling a fire within the indigenous communities to establish their distinct ethno-cultural identity. There is a tragic hero in this drama - the Lepcha community. The Lepcha was the original inhabitant of Sikkim and Darjeeling. Lepchas had been subjected to ethnic and cultural onslaughts since the British period. The British rulers declared them 'primitive', 'savage' and also a 'dying race'. It was repeatedly emphasised that the Lepchas could not adjust to the advanced

civilisation represented by the British. Presumably the colonial rulers adopted this attitude due to the refusal of the Lepcha community to shift their allegiance from the King of Sikkim, as is evident in the contemporary documents. The colonial rulers relied on the immigrant communities, especially the Nepalese, to fulfil their imperial mission. Despite their prolonged exclusion from political affairs during the colonial and post-colonial period, the Government of India declared the Lepchas as a scheduled tribe in 1968 when no other community in the entire region was conferred that status.

However, the Lepcha community went further, with a vision and mission to revive their cultural heritage under the leadership of Sonam Tserring - a musical maestro, a poet, a cultural icon in the entire region - who is still inspiring the younger generation within his community to regain their ethnic consciousness, even though he is approaching 90. He also set up an ethno-history museum to reclaim the lost memories of his community. Sonam set an example to other communities in this region. Almost every community in Darjeeling is trying to attain cultural distinction independent of a unified political agenda. In recent years, some of the communities, such as Limbus, Tamang, Sherpas, have obtained ST status and the rest are awaiting it with anxiety and hope.

The entire process produced some complex ethno-social issues. As already mentioned, the cultural exercises started with the hope of obtaining ST status, which would yield an economic advantage for the depressed communities. The most significant criteria for attaining tribal status would be to provide proof of being a tribe. A tribe should possess its own religion with distinct rituals, dress, language and a script, and above all, should be backward. This led to competition among all the communities in claiming their tribal origin. Communities like Baun and Chhetris are Hindus (some of them claim to be Brahmins); yet they also aspire to get ST status both in Darjeeling and Sikkim. This is completely contradictory to the norms laid down by Government of India. Again, some of the communities, such as the Magar community, acquired Hindu cultural traits through

their close interaction with the Hindu communities over several centuries. The present regime does recognise the cultural sentiment of the people. They are engaged with the larger agenda of establishing a separate state, although the ethnic issues figure significantly in their political slogans. At present, the issues of cultural revival are not merely confined within the agenda of attaining ST status, but are part of a greater consciousness.

In the past, the state of Sikkim also encountered ethnic discontent from the immigrant communities generically termed Nepamul. Sikkim is a latecomer in this cultural scenario. The ethnic communities in Sikkim drew their ethno-cultural paradigms from their counterparts in Darjeeling. But the cultural leaders of different communities are presently pursuing culture and ethnicity with a structured approach. The ruling regime has adopted pro-active policies to advance the cause of the ethnic communities. Some examples are cited here. Many positive steps are taken by the Government of Sikkim for the protection and promotion of the endangered languages. The Government has appointed interpreters/translators in the Legislative Assembly to revive the nearly extinct languages; this would also help communication with people in the remote areas who speak only their native language and no Nepali. But they do not have the knowledge of the script (in some cases, the script has also become extinct). The government has also introduced a curriculum to teach indigenous languages in the schools - from class four up to class ten. This step has opened a career option for a section of young people to learn their own language in order to find jobs as language teachers in schools. The government is also funding the publication of textbooks as well as newspapers/newsletters in the indigenous languages. Literary awards for writers in indigenous languages have also been instituted.

To foster ethnic harmony, significant political steps have been taken by the State. The ruling party usually follows the practice of nominating a young and energetic member of the party from a specific ethnic community to contest the election for a select constituency. The party on each occasion nominates a candidate from among different

ethnic communities for the constituencies, with some exceptions. The purpose is to ensure that the candidate would not only work for the improvement of his/her community but also take care of others. This practice fosters ethnic harmony and at the same time serves the interest of all communities in turn. It must also be emphasised that both the State and the parties are following a progressive gender policy, both in cultural and political affairs.

In the mission statement, the State calls for the conversion of Sikkim into a tribal state. The process started few decades ago. Earlier, the Government of Sikkim had appointed a Commission under B. K. Roy Burman to probe into the tribal affairs of the state with an aim to improve their socio-economic condition. The present government seeks to implement the recommendations of the Roy Burman Commission. The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been requested to consider the issue.

The present government is also taking initiatives to encourage different ethnic communities to organise their festivals through state support. The government is providing liberal funding to the communities to pursue and profess their cultural traits. Some festive days have been included within the list of state holidays.

Indeed, there are critiques of the ethnic policies of the state of Sikkim. One may read a populist element in the policy; yet an account of the policies may unfold many positive aspects which are ultimately benefitting the depressed communities.

One may not admit that the situation for the ethnic communities is dismal in Darjeeling. The ethno-cultural consciousness was first initiated in Darjeeling. In fact, Sikkim followed the example set by the ethnic communities in Darjeeling. However, it may appear to be a paradox that the ethnic communities in Darjeeling are yet to establish a road map. The state is still oblivious about the cultural scenario in Darjeeling and has to acknowledge centuries of indifference and apathy towards them. The matter should be viewed beyond the imperatives of electoral politics. The situation demands empathy and also accountability to those people who are occasionally seen but rarely heard.

Book Reviews:

Krishnan Srinivasan

OB Markers: My Straits Times Story
Cheong Yip Seng
Straits Times Press, Singapore, 2013

Cheong retired from the Straits Times of Singapore in 2006 after 43 years. Beginning as a cub trainee reporter working in the press room in 1963, the year of independence, he ended as editor, and this is the story not only of the paper but of politics and the nation during the years of union with Malaysia and the subsequent break up, the years of stress and the current years of considerable prosperity.

Singapore is known for its stability, its honesty and its authoritarian style of government. Hence the views of the media from an insider's point of view are of interest. It has always been a question of how to manage the government's keen eye and occasional heavy hand with the requirements of a 'free' press; and catering to the needs of the public who want more than dry as-dust thinly veiled official communiques.

During all these years Singapore, to all intents and purposes a one-party state in which political opposition almost implies treason, has had only three prime ministers, which speaks for itself: the redoubtable Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Chok Tong, and currently Lee Hsien Loon. Cheong relates that the stern supervision has been modified as the decades have gone by, and he excuses the severity of the discipline by claiming that the media was disciplined or self-disciplined in the interests of nation building; in the early days the survival of the state was at stake, especially in its dependence on unfriendly Malaysia, and required the efforts of all patriots to rally behind the leadership to present a united front. Therefore it was voluntary cooperation with the government for the general good. No doubt Pravda and Izvestia during the period of the Soviet Union would have expressed similar sentiments. Lee Kuan Yew in his tribute to Cheong on the jacket cover states: 'Cheong Yip Seng was a most reliable news editor', which in other circumstances would hardly be considered a recommendation. 'OB Markers' is a term explained only one third of the way through the text, but



apparently refers in Singapore slang to 'Out of Bounds Markers', a term coined by former minister of information and the arts George Yeo, to indicate the forbidden areas into which the media could not tread. They had to take such warnings very seriously: Lee Kuan Yew once told newsmen he would have to use knuckle-dusters to make them fall in line. It is never made clear whether he was being literal, humorous or neither. In any case, few editors took a chance. Draconian measures were taken against journalists who did not toe the government's line. It may have worked for the city-state of Singapore with its majority Chinese population; it is very doubtful if this experience could be replicated elsewhere in the modern age.

**Samudra Manthan:
Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific
C. Raja Mohan
Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2013**

Each state perceives itself to be acting defensively to protect its security but these actions are often seen as threatening by others, escalating the cycle of insecurity. India and China have managed their rivalry moderately well; as nuclear confrontations go, this one is relatively mild mannered. India and China are moving away from their obsession with guarding land frontiers. On the high seas, China encroaches on the Indian sphere of influence in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean; while India ventures beyond the Malacca Straits to the Western Pacific. The new maritime interest to protect sea lanes, access raw materials, and build blue water capabilities is a consequence of globalization on their economies. In this enterprise, India and China will run into the USA which is the dominant sea force, and the author examines the triangular dynamic that is unfolding. India is the weakest link in this strategic triangle, not least due to its geographic proximity to China, and will seek to leverage it for its advantage.

The notion of Sino-Indian rivalry has been enduring, and the author's intention is to assess the geopolitical consequences of China and India turning to the sea. With missions changing from coastal defence to blue water activities, there will

be pressure to deploy nuclear weapons at sea. Control of strategic islands has always been central to strategy. A competitive dynamic has already been created. There are of course factors in both countries to prevent this happening: slower economic growth, reduction of military spending, other defence priorities, political and geographic constraints, possible countervailing coalitions, and the policies of the USA.

The basic presumption in this text is that the interests of India and the USA might find themselves in greater convergence vis-a-vis China, which opens the possibility of maritime cooperation. The incipient Indo-Chinese rivalry will be determined not merely by Sino-Indian ties but by USA. Britain adjusted to the rise of leadership at sea by the US, but will the USA do likewise to the rise of India and China? At the present juncture this question appears fanciful. Equating India with China in military terms, given India's lack of indigenous defence production, is perhaps unrealistic. Among India's many liabilities are its well-known complicated political and bureaucratic procedures and the US-Pakistan relationship. To describe India as an 'economic powerhouse' is far-fetched - even compared to a Europe and USA in relative decline. India is described as a 'lynchpin' in the US strategy to rebalance the Pacific, and discussion of a 'natural alliance' between India and the US, reinforced by 'shared democratic values', is surely unrealistic and seems influenced by Indophiles in the USA, led by Ashley Tellis. It is more likely that the US will be the supreme dominant military power well into this century despite fiscal austerity, and will not look around for a coalition of the willing.

The author aptly takes note of the political opposition in India to closer formal ties with the US, citing the civil nuclear liability law and the exclusion of US companies from the purchase of 126 fighter planes - he oddly calls it a 'hedging strategy'. Even odder, perhaps inexcusable, is the absence in the whole narrative of Russia, also an Asian power, and the second most powerful military nation with a wide reach. Mohan notes the unlikelihood of a US-China condominium, which was explicitly rejected by Beijing. Xi Jinping's 'new

type of big power relations' was apparently a concept developed after this book was written and no mention is made of it. Even more distant is a possible Sino-Indian entente; China is lukewarm about a bigger role for India in the world; it is ambiguous about India as a permanent member of the UNSC or the non proliferation regime. Its nuclear cooperation with Pakistan will not cease and there is no call by Beijing on Pakistan to eliminate sources of international terror.

This book deals with many imponderable and speculative matters, but the author deserves credit for looking into the future of a little discussed subject. As he writes; 'In the near term, India is unlikely to shape the nuclear, missile and space contestation between the US and China in the western Pacific. As India strengthens its capabilities in these areas and if US-Indian maritime security cooperation expands, the nuclear and space dynamic will likewise expand to cover the Indo-Pacific region.' There you have it in a nutshell.

engage academics and opinion makers in a discussion to examine the problems and debate issues such as:

1. History of India-Nepal relationship
2. Positioning India and Nepal in the contemporary context.
3. Growing together: Making the most of economic complementarities.
4. Issues of discord between India and Nepal.
5. Building a common security agenda: Tackling traditional and non-traditional security issues.
6. External factors in Indo-Nepal relations.

Ambassador Deb Mukherjee delivered the keynote. He shared insightful observations on Indo-Nepal relations, explaining that Indo-Nepal relations do not fall under the usual paradigm of inter-state relations. The multiple points of contact and interaction, cultural connectivity, legacies of history, and compulsions of geography have contributed to a complex relationship where conventional models are not applicable. Scholars from both Nepal and India participated in the debate and discussions.

Reports On Selected Academic Activities 2013

**Roundtable:
Indo-Nepal relations**

**8
FEBRUARY**

**Panel discussion:
Buddhist studies in India**

**17
JUNE**

A Roundtable on Indo-Nepal Relations was organized by MAKAIAS, Kolkata on 8 February 2013. Nepal-India relations are unique for reasons ranging from geographical contiguity to close cultural ties, and we share extensive institutional and social relationships. Cultural, economic and geographical factors along with the common bond of a shared religion have had a great influence on bilateral relations. As two sovereign nations, both India and Nepal are naturally guided by their national interests pertaining to cultural, economic and security issues. Despite some turbulence in the past, India-Nepal relations have remained close, stable and mutually beneficial. In this context a comprehensive analysis of the Indo-Nepal relationship with their domestic determinants is of immense importance. This Roundtable intended to

MAKAIAS organised a panel discussion on Buddhist Studies in India with the aim of bringing together ideas and commentaries of scholars, leading experts and heads of various institutions and universities within India to reflect on (a) Buddhism as a cultural tradition (b) Buddhism as a living tradition and (c) structure of Buddhist studies in India. The Institute's broader project of bringing together an entire gamut of ideas about Buddhist linkages across South and Southeast Asia was elucidated by the Director of the Institute. The idea was formulated during the 10th BCIM Forum meet in 2012. It is hoped that that the initiative will offer a window of opportunity for exploring the scope of 'engaged Buddhism'. The relevance of Buddhism in the contemporary world is not only its spiritual and ethereal component; it seems to have

a lasting impact because of its soft-power positioning in the contemporary world. The primary goal of this initiative is to create a network of Buddhist studies institutions within India and facilitate a link with India's neighbours, where Buddhism is a way of life. The panel discussion was divided into three sections:

The discussions focused on classical subjects like Pali literature in Buddhist studies, contacts between the Buddhological schools in India and Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, to the cosmopolitan milieu of the Tibetan community in India, the character of living Buddhism in Northeast India, Buddhist linkages between South and Southeast Asia and the appeal of Buddhist Tourism projects like the Buddhist Circuit that connects India and Nepal.

International seminar: Synthesis of raga and maqam in Kashmiri musical culture

20
JUNE



MAKAIAS, in collaboration with the Centre for Central Asian Studies of the University of Kashmir, Srinagar, organized an international seminar on musical traditions of the Kashmir valley and their connectivity with Indian Raga and Central Asian Maqam traditions, held in Kashmir, Srinagar.

The phenomenon of raga-maqam exhibits special characteristics in the musical tradition of inhabitants of many countries of East. It is the basis of research on musical aesthetic traditions and theories underlying musical traditions. Interrelations between the Raga-Ragini and 12 maqam systems in India have produced amazing results and brought in a distinctive synthesis with

the Sufiyana Kalam in Kashmir.

The seminar aimed to investigate the unique character of Kashmiri Sufiyana Kalam in the context of interrelations between Indian and Central Asian music in the maqam-raga phenomenon and the role of musical instruments, which are connected with the rendering of professional music, through analysis of contemporary musical traditions of Indian Ragas, Central Asian Shashmaqom and Uyghur's Muqam. The experts participating in the seminar were from within the country and abroad, particularly Uzbekistan, Japan, France and UK. The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Sunita Dhar, ex-Dean and Head, Faculty of Music and Fine Arts, Delhi University. One of the sessions included a discussion between Kashmiri musicians Ustad Ghulam Mhd. Saznawaz, Ustad Mhd. Yaqoob Sheikh and Mhd. Mushtaq Saznawaz. The special sessions included the screening of a documentary and a concert by Kashmiri musicians. The documentary, titled *Mann Fageeri*, made by renowned actor-director M.K. Raina, is based on Kashmir's Sufiyana Kalam. The Concert was presented by Ustad Mhd.Yaqoob Sheikh and his five students, who learn the Sufiyana Kalam in Qalinbaf musical school run by the Ustad.



Symposium: India's foreign policy: The power matrix'

24
AUGUST

International seminar and symposium: Geographies of globalization in Eurasia

30
SEPTEMBER
to
1
OCTOBER

The Symposium 'India's Foreign Policy: The Power Matrix' explored India's emergence as a major actor in the international arena through the prism of material indicators like economic growth and military expansion buttressing the importance of her soft power credentials. The judicious combination of hard and soft power dynamics that shape international politics has been conceived of by scholars as 'Smart Power'. The four eminent speakers in the symposium were Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty (Secretary, MEA), Jawhar Sircar (CEO, Prasar Bharati), Swapan Mullick (Director, The Statesman Print Journalism School) and Ranabir Samaddar (Director, CRG). They debated extensively on the question of whether India's 'Smart Power' potential is capable of helping the Indian state to achieve its global ambitions and foreign policy objectives. Krishnan Srinivasan, Maulana Azad Fellow and Former Foreign Secretary, chaired the Symposium.

Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty talked about the new dimensions of Public Diplomacy adopted by the Government of India to enhance her diplomatic endeavours beyond the traditional edifice. Jawhar Sircar narrated the progressive journey of India along the global ladder, curving the Asian century in a significant way. Swapan Mullick spoke of the cultural aspects of power with exclusive focus on Indian cinema which effectively showcases her rich heritage and civilizational strength. Ranabir Samaddar critiqued the entire idea of a power matrix and the subsequent positioning of India along that continuum. He argued for a relative framework and subaltern perspective for understanding power politics in its true sense. Ambassador Krishnan Srinivasan summed up the symposium by delving deep into the several questions raised on the floor and by stressing on the ambiguous gap attributable to the absence of an appropriate definition of the power matrix.

The seminar on Geographies of Globalization in Eurasia explored Eurasian engagement with geographies of globalization from a variety of perspectives. It analysed how, as the process of globalization fundamentally alters the way people, commodities and information flow and interact, new and complex geographies are continuously created. The discussions centred round issues like energy and transportation, management of resources like oil and gas, demographic patterns and flows, as well as environmental concerns. It also took note of challenges encountered by social groups and communities in the face of globalizing tendencies and intricate patterns of connectivity. The role of emerging alternatives within the region, and community partnerships in Eurasia were also addressed. The panels focused on

1. Intersection of space and place in Eurasia
2. Eurasian engagement with globalization
3. Connectivity and globalization
4. Global strategies and architectures
5. Alternative globalizations and Islam

This was followed by a Roundtable titled 'Are regional initiatives meaningful in the Eurasian context?' on the afternoon of 1 October, in the course of which the relevance of the 'region' was highlighted in the context of globalization. The roundtable examined regional linkages and their geopolitical significance in terms of projecting a unified perspective on issues to carry more political weight in the international arena. It initiated a discussion on the various regional initiatives in Eurasia and compared them with regional initiatives and organizations in other parts of Asia. Participants in the seminar and roundtable included historian Dmitri Shlapentokh who delivered the keynote, scholars from Uzbekistan (Farkhad Tolipov) Kazakhstan (Alexei Zelenskiy) Turkey (Anar Somuncuoğlu) and scholars working on the region like Michael Fredholm as well as others from India.



**National seminar:
Trade at India's border
with the neighbouring
countries: Challenges
and prospects**

**18-19
OCTOBER**

MAKAIAS Kolkata in collaboration with the I.R. Department, Sikkim University organised a National Seminar on 'Trade at India's Border with the Neighbouring Countries: Challenges and Prospects' at Sikkim University, Sikkim. The thrust of the seminar was to emphasize the potentialities, constraints and prospects of trade at India's borders with the neighbouring countries, as well as to appraise to what extent India's Northeast stands to benefit from the development of the trade transactions. The sub-themes of the seminar highlighted some of the following issues:

- Role of the trade at Northeast India's borders in the expanded engagements between India and her neighbours.
- Northeast Region's political and security questions in lieu of boosting trade at India's borders.
- The implication of the trade at Northeast India's borders in the social, political and economic matrix of the NER and its contribution to addressing the unresolved problems of the region.
- Whether the pursuit of trade at Northeast India's border is adequate to alleviate the existing structural problems of the NER or whether its implementation has suffered due to inherent structural deficiencies.

The seminar witnessed participation from across the country. The keynote address, delivered by Prof. Samir Das, Vice Chancellor of North Bengal University, made a case for understanding border trade as only a part of border economy. Border economy, by all accounts, functions in a way that threatens not only to obliterate the commonplace distinction between official and unofficial trade, but reinforces identity politics by way of deploying it as a technology of governing the unofficial trade. The seminar was followed by a Roundtable

discussion wherein the credibility of the seminar as a platform for dissemination of insightful perceptions on the intricacies of its theme, as well as a medium of popular awareness and people to people contact, was evaluated.

**International delegation:
Visit from VIISAS, Hanoi,
Vietnam**

**27-31
OCTOBER**

**Seminar:
States, borders, religion
in south-east Asia**

**29
OCTOBER**

A two-member delegation from Vietnam consisting of Prof. Ngo Xuan Binh, Director-General of the Vietnam Institute of Indian and Southwest Asian Studies (VIISAS) and Dr Le Thi Hang Nga, Head of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, VIISAS, visited MAKAIAS from 27-31 October. MAKAIAS had signed a MOU with VIISAS, Hanoi, Vietnam on 14 February, 2012. The two Institutes recognised the mutual benefits of fostering academic exchange and partnership for furthering research and training on both sides by exchange of Institute's members and researchers, and organising joint research activities including seminars and conferences. Following this, a four-member delegation from MAKAIAS, including the Director and three executive council members visited VIISAS from July 30-August 2, 2012. The VIISAS Institute reciprocated by sending this delegation led by their Director General, Prof Ngo Xuan Binh. During their visit they interacted with scholars of other universities like Viswa-Bharati, Santiniketan, IFPS and the Department of History, University of Calcutta. VIISAS had requested the organisation of a collaborative International conference under the aegis of the MOU signed between the two Institutes.

MAKAIAS, therefore organised a seminar on 'States, Borders, Religion in South East Asia' on 29 October, where members of the delegation from Vietnam interacted with scholars from different organisations in Kolkata. The purpose of the seminar was to explore the apparent mismatch between the religious culture of Southeast Asia (with emphasis on Buddhism) and inter-state relations which are marked by the use of force, from small-scale short-lived incursions to full-scale wars.

International and National Seminars and Panel Discussions, 2013

January 29	Swami Vivekananda: External journey towards truth
February 8	Indo-Nepal relations
March 13-14	Asia Perspectives 2013; Beyond strategies: Cultural dynamics in Asian connections
March 15	India's soft power in Asia
June 17	Buddhist studies in India
August 19-20	Regionalism, sub-regionalism & connectivity: India's foreign policy in the 21st century (in collaboration with the Jadavpur Association of International Relations (JAIR) and the Public Diplomacy Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India)
August 24	India's foreign policy: The power matrix
September 30-October 1	Geographies of globalization in Eurasia
October 1	Are regional initiatives meaningful in the Eurasian context?
October 18-19	Trade at India's border with the neighbouring countries : Challenges and prospects (in collaboration with International Relations department, Sikkim University)
October 29	States, borders, religion in South East Asia

Lectures and Talks, 2013

January 4	Srimanti Sarkar (Research Assistant, MAKAIAS)	Rethinking the concept of democracy in Bangladesh
January 22	Ron Sela (Indiana University, USA)	Central Asia's 'decline': A re-evaluation
February 22	Sk. Aktar Ali (Senior Research Assistant, MAKAIAS)	Maulana Azad & the modernization of national education in India (1947-1958)
March 1	Sushmita Bhattacharya (Fellow, MAKAIAS)	Russian language volumes in the MAKAIAS library and a glossary of Russian terms commonly used in the social sciences
March 3	Arpita Basu (Fellow, MAKAIAS)	Towards cultural mapping of Northeast India in respect of art and crafts

March 18	P.R. Kumaraswamy (Professor, Centre for West Asian Studies JNU)	Navigating popular protests in the Arab world: The elusive model
April 2	Col. P.K. Gautam (Retd), (Research Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses)	Relevance of Kautilya's Arthashastra
April 19	Mrinal Chakma (Fellow, MAKAIAS)	Indigenous identity and developmental discourse: UN standards and the experience of the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh
April 26	Satarupa Dutta Majumdar (Fellow, MAKAIAS)	Indigenous knowledge: Exploring its epistemology, ecological sustainability and conservational modalities
June 18	Azhar Khan Chikmagalur Akbar (Research Intern, MAKAIAS)	Indo-Bangladeshi Common Rivers- Challenges and Prospects for Cooperation
June 26	Simanti Dasgupta (Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology Anthropology and Social Work, University of Dayton, USA)	Sovereign silence: The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act and sex work in Sonagachhi, West Bengal
July 19	Kaushik Roy (Associate Professor of History, Jadavpur University)	The 'Turbulent Frontier': Afghanistan and the Indus frontier from British-India to present times
July 29	Julie Mehta and Harish Mehta (University of Toronto)	Strongman: The extraordinary life of Hun Sen; From pagoda boy to Prime Minister
August 5	Krishnan Srinivasan (Former Foreign Secretary and Fellow, MAKAIAS)	Europe and emerging Asia
September 10	Partha Ghosh (Senior fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library)	The other side of Partition: Resonances on cultural expressions
October 3	Dmitry Shlapentokh (Associate Professor of History, Indiana University)	Russian national Identity in Putin's Russia
October 25	Mainak Sen (Fellow MAKAIAS)	Indusial development and investment in Sikkim
November 1	Amrita Dey (Fellow, MAKAIAS)	India and Myanmar Relations: Prospects and Impediments in our Bilateral Engagement post 2010



FIELD TRIPS 2013-14

April	Anita Sengupta, Arpita Basu Roy & Diloram Karomat, Tashkent, Samarkand & Bukhara, Srimanti Sarkar, Bangladesh
May	Susmita Bhattacharya - Delhi
July	Arpita Basu - Arunachal Pradesh, Aktar Ali British Museum & Library
August	Suchandana Chatterjee - Astana & Almaty (Kazakhstan)
September	Priya Singh - Egypt (Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Luxor), Monika Mandal - Nepal Sayantani Sen Mazumdar - Myanmar Arpita Basu - Arunachal Pradesh
November	Amrita Dey - Delhi
December	Arpita Basu - Nagaland Susmita Bhattacharya - Mundgod, Karnataka
December 2013/Jan 2014	Mrinal Kanti Chakma - Nepal/Bangladesh Srimanti Sarkar - Delhi
December 2013	Nandini Bhattacharyya Panda - Sikkim & Darjeeling
January 2014	Rafique Anwar - Delhi, Aligarh, Patna, Guwahati Monika Mandal - NEHU, Shillong
February 2014	Susmita Bhattacharya - Ulan Ude, Buryatia Srimanti Sarkar - Pakistan Mili Ghose - Delhi
March 2014	Suhita Saha - Delhi Monika Mandal - Nepal Mili Ghose - Meghalaya (Cherrapunji)



Fieldtrip to Myanmar by Sayantini Sen Mazumdar



Geographies of Globalisation Seminar



A conference in session



A Roundtable in progress



MAKAIAS Chairman and Director at the Foreign Policy symposium



The Indo Nepal Roundtable

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