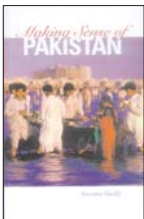
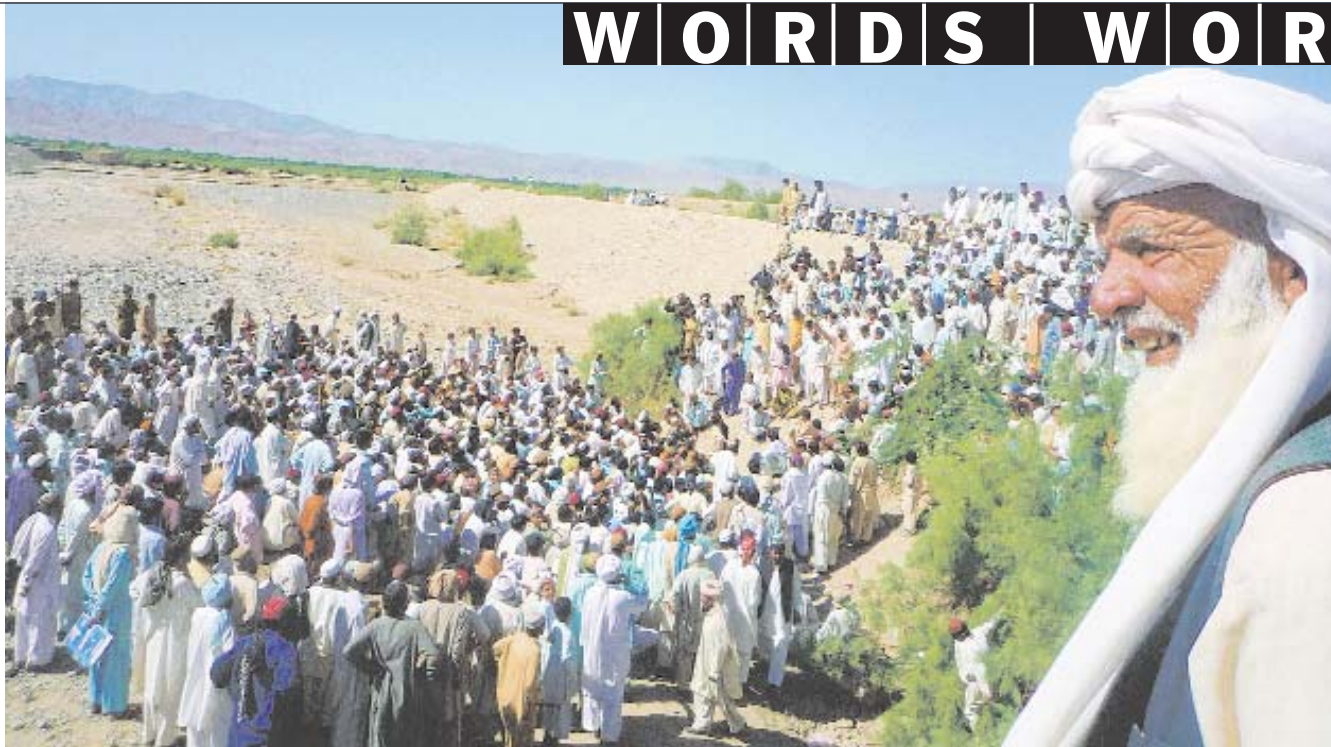


WORDS WORTH



MAKING SENSE OF PAKISTAN
Farzana Shaikh
CHurst & Co
Publishers
Rs 395; Pp ix+274

DNA OF A NATION

Understanding contemporary Pakistan through the lens of history

Dhiraj Nayyar

ALL TOO often the explanation for the current turmoil in Pakistan—in particular the threat of radical Islamists—is traced back to the events of 9/11. Unfortunately, that is far too simple a characterisation of Pakistan's problems. And that is why Farzana Shaikh's book is such an important contribution to the literature on understanding contemporary Pakistan in a historical perspective. And it sure lives up to its title—*Making Sense of Pakistan*—through its 200-odd pages.

Where this book departs from other work on Pakistan's history in the post-partition years is its originality in viewing different aspects of the country's political, economic, military and social life through the prism of Islam and the state—how the role of Islam was interpreted, reinterpreted and constant-

ly debated over the decades to try and give a foundation to a fledgling country that was founded as a homeland for South Asia's Muslims. In fact, Shaikh argues that it is the almost permanent ambivalence over the role of Islam that has prevented Pakistan from acquiring the necessary foundations for a modern nation state. Was it to be a secular Muslim-majority nation where minorities had rights and religion stayed away from politics, or was it to be a truly Islamic country?

Shaikh doesn't hesitate to criticise Mohammad Ali Jinnah, often portrayed as a truly secular by many in Pakistan and indeed India. But events leading up to partition, and in the brief period thereafter when Jinnah was still alive, suggest that he was a cynical manipulator of Islam for his political cause as many of his successors. Shaikh draws the attention to numerous contradictory statements that Jinnah made in this context. Interestingly, Shaikh highlights the fact

that partition was not something that right wing Islamists supported. For them the idea of Islamic brotherhood/nation could not be defined within territorial borders. Nor in fact were residents, particularly the landlords of Western Punjab and Sindh, strong believers in partition. The movement (and the Muslim League) was driven by the salaried classes of Muslims living in Hindu-majority provinces of British India.

It is no surprise that post-1947 they struggled to establish a legitimate political base in either West or East Pakistan and therefore more often than not had to invoke Islam as the source of their legitimacy. However, this was never simple and Pakistan failed to agree on a Constitution until as late as 1956 primarily because there was no agreement on the role of Islam in matters of the state. Representatives from East Pakistan, which in 1947 contained a Hindu population which was 15% of the total, resisted any hardline Islamic interpretation of the state. By the time an agreement on a Constitution was reached the fledgling political class had already lost much credibility and the military was ready for a takeover. Needless to say, they too would use Islam to legitimise their rule.

Unfortunately, as history tells us in no uncertain terms, Islam was never going to be

glue enough for a country which was deeply divided along regional and linguistic lines. The separation of East Pakistan was perhaps the most telling evidence of the folly of appealing simply to Islam as glue for a nation.

Interestingly, the one thing that does come out from Shaikh's work is that in fact no leader in Pakistan, in or out of uniform was genuinely secular. Even the apparently liberal Zulfikar Bhutto placated hardline Islamists by disenfranchising Ahmediyas in 1974. And Benazir Bhutto turned a blind eye to militancy in Kashmir.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of the book is the bit on Zia ul Haq—how he was actually the first Pakistani leader to be able to provide a coherent—even if seriously flawed—link between Islam and the state. He extended Islamisation domestically (mostly in the social and legal sphere) and moved towards establishing an Islamic state within Pakistan's territorial borders carefully guarded by the army. And he placated the Islamic right by persuading them that Pakistan's commitment to Islam extended beyond territorial borders—through promoting the Islamic cause in Afghanistan and Kashmir. But as Shaikh points out Zia's was a firmly sunni version of Islam which excluded most importantly Pakistan's significant Shia population. This created another internal divide in addition to region, ethnicity and language.

This history is most relevant to the turmoil in Pakistan today. Because for the army to turn on its (Sunni) Islamists allies in Afghanistan and Kashmir is more than just betrayal—it is going back on a fundamental tenet of Pakistani statehood (linking the state and Islam) as laid out by Zia. It would, therefore, be naïve to pretend that any leader in Pakistan, army or civilian, can simply destroy the very allies which gave the state a raison-d'être beyond territorial borders (within the borders, there was and is much divide). Notice how even the 'liberal' General Musharraf freely used jihad as an instrument of state policy in Kashmir and continuously played a double game with the West even after 9/11.

This book is a must read for anyone interested in understanding Pakistan's problems. It is a highly analytical, original and dispassionate study of one of the most complex countries in the world.

SHELF LIFE

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WOLF HALL
Hilary Mantel
Harper Collins
Rs 670



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JUST OUT

ECOSYSTEMS



While analysing the trade-offs between growth in agriculture and environmental sustainability, *Water, Agriculture, and Sustainability Well-Being* focuses on the balance between private benefits and sustainable development, growing demand-supply gaps, inter-sectoral allocation and pricing of water, and trade and environment. It also takes into account context-specific issues such as arsenic contamination in India and Bangladesh, and farmer's suicides in Andhra Pradesh.

Water, Agriculture...; Unai Pascual et al.; Oxford; Rs 750; Pp 316

GOOD GOVERNANCE



New Governance and Development: Challenges of Addressing Poverty and Inequality analyses the nature of new governance and identifies some of the key challenges that it may pose at different levels.

Pluralisation of state is the major feature of new governance. The three actors of development, state, market and civil society have to work together for arriving at a synergistic solution. The harmony has to be attained through participation, accountability and transparency.

New Governance...; HS Shylendra; AF; Rs 995; Pp 363

CELEBRATING LIFE



Remembering the Juice of Mango is a story of survival and hope. It is a story of two children—Ratna and Dev who are orphaned during the violent events that came about as a result of Partition of 1947. A Sikh couple reached out to them, through their own pain and trauma, while fleeing the newly created Pakistan. Difficult days follow as Ratna and her newly forged family journey across unfamiliar land.

Remembering...; Neena Kahlon; Rupa; Rs 395; Pp 355

TERRA FIRMA



In Search of Sita: Revisiting Mythology explores different aspects of her life, revisits mythology, reopening the debate on her birth, her exile, abduction, the test by fire, the birth of her sons and, finally, her return to the earth—offering fresh interpretations of this enigmatic figure and her indelible impact on our everyday lives.

In Search of...; Ed by Namita Gokhale, Malashri Lal Penguin; Rs 399; Pp 288

CULTURAL UNANIMITY



The sixth novel in the ever-more increasingly inaccurately named *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* trilogy, *Another Thing* comes on the 30th anniversary of publication of the first book. The final book in the Hitchhiker's series ended with the complete destruction of Earth. So how does Colfer bring the eternal pessimist Arthur Dent, his alien best friend, Ford Prefect, and the two-headed Galactic President, Zaphod Beelbebrox, back from the dead?

And Another Thing...; Eoin Colfer; Penguin; Rs 399

BESTSELLERS

FOR WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 18

FICTION



- **2 States** Chetan Bhagat
- **The Lost Symbol** Dan Brown
- **The Winner Stands Alone** Paulo Coelho
- **Unaccustomed Earth** Jhumpa Lahiri
- **Mistress of the Game** Tilly Bagshawe

NON FICTION



- **Imagining India** Nandan Nilekani
- **The Secret** Rhonda Byrne
- **Ascent Of Money** Niall Ferguson
- **The Professional** Subroto Bagchi
- **Jinnah** Jaswant Singh

SOURCE: CROSSWORD

Life at urban margins

Delves into the costs of key urban services and field data from six cities

EXPRESS PHOTO



Chetan Vaidya

INDIA HAS to improve its urban areas to achieve objectives of economic development. As huge investment is required in India's urban sector, it has to look for innovative approaches for financing urban services. However, most critical factors for introducing these innovations are a healthy municipal revenue base and good urban governance. In this context, this book has examined the costs of key urban services and identified governance issues. It is based on rich field data from six cities, namely, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Bangalore, Pune, Jaipur, and Surat and also provides detailed case studies of Ludhiana (Punjab) and Rajkot (Gujarat).

The book has estimated marginal costs of providing urban services in India. Then, it estimated total expenditure required for ensuring a certain level of services and compared it with present level of expenditure. Finally, it identified financial and institutional challenges in introducing urban reforms in the country.

Most water supply systems are not able to recover even operation and maintenance costs. Bangalore is one of the very few cities where tariff revisions have led to a marginal surplus and it is mainly due to high water charges paid by non-domestic consumers. The study has concluded that existing water pricing structures are obsolete and need to be replaced by simple, easy and transparent structures. It has recommended that water metering should be integral part of overall price reform agenda. As far as solid waste management is concerned, there is no direct charging system in India for this service. It is financed out of general tax revenues like property tax. Spending on this service in selected cities except Pune is highly inadequate. Study has also analysed costs and revenue of sewerage, roads, and street lights. It shows that while in case of sewerage finances are core of the service delivery problems but in case of street lighting and roads, governance is part of the problem.

Detailed case studies of Ludhiana and Rajkot

provide very crucial information on local urban governance issues. In Ludhiana Municipal Corporation (LMC), bottlenecks to reform are: State Water Supply Board responsible for implementing major projects; LMC does not have technical expertise to manage services; LMC is not able to increase user charges for services; lack of public participation; and inadequate planning.

In Rajkot Municipal Corporation (RMC), emphasis is on private sector involvement in the city management. Private contractors are extensively used in solid waste management. Private developers are participating joint land development projects such as fire stations, community centers and others. Though it had a substantial revenue surplus in year 2002-03, it recovered less than 25% of total expenditure on water supply. The study found that the city has limited technical capacity, and there is inadequate accountability of private sector. These problems are perhaps not limited to Ludhiana but are common to many Indian cities.

In response to urban problems, the government launched a reform-linked urban infrastructure investment project, Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The states and urban local governments accessing the JNNURM must complete a total of 22 reforms during the seven-year period. The book has described various reforms under JNNURM. It has also identified innovative management practices like municipal bonds, private sector participation, community participation in financing of services etc.

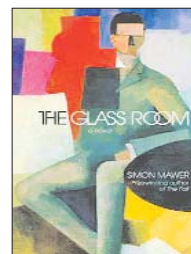
Findings of the study strongly suggest that over and above of the issue of finances, institutional and functional overlap of responsibilities are also responsible for poor delivery of the urban services. The book provides important and useful insights into costs and governance issues of delivery systems in urban India. It is unfortunate that it did not adequately cover the issue of urban services for the poor.

The reviewer is Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs



Beware of darkness

A novel of ideas traces 20 years of Czech's first republic with great flourish



THE GLASS ROOM
Simon Mawer
Little Brown
Rs 550; Pp 405

Sudipta Datta

IT'S a book of ideas with many layers; it's about individual lives, universal histories; it's about love, loss and the essential loneliness of being.

On one level, the Booker-nominated *The Glass Room* is a study in contrasts: set around a stunning piece of modern architecture in Czechoslovakia of the 30s, the glass space is transparent, tranquil and open, but soon it will have to battle narrow nationalism; similarly, the lives of the Landauers, owners of the glass room with onyx walls and travertine floors, are open and transparent while their private lives are anything but.

First, the story: the Landauers, rich and famous for building motor cars, are on their honeymoon to Venice when they meet new-age architect Rainer von Abt. When he comes to know that the Landauers are looking to build a new house, he offers his services, convincing them to denounce the "millstones of brick and stone that hung about people's necks," and go for glass and steel and concrete instead. Von Abt, wishing to give them a glass space to inhabit where he can float in the air, is asked to design a "Glass Space" for the Landauers.

The Glass Room is central character of the book, of course, and everything that happens to the colourful characters has some relation to the room. Inspired by Tugendhat House in Brno, in 1930 a wonder in glass and steel and concrete, Mawer's glass room is built in Mesto, a provincial Czech town. The house is built as Liesel Landauer gives birth, a parallel with the birth of Czechoslovakia out of the Habsburg Empire when there is such a sense of optimism and openness in the air.

But things happen, swiftly, and the Glass Room will be first overrun by the Nazis, then the Soviets and finally the Czechoslovak state. From sheltering the Landauers who have to flee because Viktor is a Jew, it becomes a laboratory for the Nazis testing humans to find a clue about Jewish traits; a bunker during the war and then a resthouse for war-scarred children.

Finally, after the collapse of Communism, and after three decades of exile, the Landauers return to the glass room, or rather to what's left of it. Mawer's best with the women characters, Liesel and her daughter Ottilie; her bisexual friend Hana; Viktor's mistress Kata. But like the Glass House, which is once accused of being cold, Mawer's connection to some of his characters is rather cold.

Viktor is finished off in a sailing accident; we know little of the son; we aren't told enough about comrade-to-be Lanik's sly ways; in fact, there appears to be a rush to return to the Glass Room and reach where the story began. But nevertheless *The Glass Room* is a book of possibilities, a story of a time when art, language, creativity flourished in a country till Hitler crushed a dream.

