#### REGIONAL COOPERATION

## The future is now

JACKIE HAQUE, back from Bentota, Sri Lanka

HILE the soldiers of India and Pakistan stood nose-to-nose along their borders for another possible war, the young South Asian scholars gathered at Bentota in Sri Lanka to talk about cooperation, not between only India and Pakistan, but among all the countries of the region.

It was a South Asian dialogue - organised by the Colombo-based think-tank Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) - meant for shaping the future of the region. At times, the mood in the conference hall was mired by differences between the Indians and the Pakistanis; between Bangladeshis and the Pakistanis; or between the Indians and the Nepalis; yet the participants overcame those through their vision for South Asia. And they cited a unique example that through amity and goodwill, differences and conflicts can be

"My kind of South Asia would be a place where there is no room for petty nationalism and short-term geopolitics; where rifts are not rationalised and prejudices not reinforced; a region where Pakistanis know about Indians, Indians about Bangladeshis, Bangladeshis about Sri Lankans and everyone about each other and the rest of the world about this long suffering region," said Adnan Rehmat, editor of the Islamabad-based Internews, while speaking on conflict resolution in South

At this point, Umme Salma from New Delhi sounded guite frustrated about the possibility of cooperation, when she said: "What cooperation are you talking about, when we in India and Pakistan cannot even fly over each-other's countries?"

Judging by the goings-on of the Bentota conference, South Asia - the home for one-fifth of the population of the world - was found to be a region divided between hope and despair. It will take a while before an Indian or a Bangladeshi or a Pakistani or even a Sri Lankan can really call him/herself a "South Asian". But it was a perfect beginning of a new era. The peoples in region do want peace and stability like any other region in the world and we have the potential and goodwill of being more than friends with our neighbours. Together we can be one of the most prosperous regions in the world.

"If we look at the European Union, we see that their

journey begun at a much earlier time, in 1960...So they had a long way to come where they are today," said General Dipankar Banerjee - the RCSS Executive Director, Indeed, compared to that SAARC - the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation- which is relatively a new concept. The reason why SAARC is not being able to give any positive result is due to the fact

that it is caught in a bureaucratic whirlpool. The interstate conflicts between our countries can always be settled as long as the countries do have the willingness to do so. But mistrust and mutual animosity are to be held responsible here. The imperial rulers sewed the much-disputed Kashmir issue in 1947. Can't the unambiguous borders and Line of Control be redefined? Before anything else, can't we ask the Kashmiris about what they want?

All this can be done through friendship and openness among the regional governments. The people of Bangladesh have bitter experiences of the atrocities committed by the Pakistani army in 1971, but today's generation in Pakistan is not aware of what the army had done in erstwhile East Pakistan. It needs more communication, more education about 1971 war to reduce the difference between Bangladeshis and Pakistanis.

However, there's good news. The long 18-year conflict in Sri Lanka is progressing towards its resolution. Sri Lanka is now a country where different religious and ethnic group can co-exist.

But concerns remain. Bangladesh has a huge number of stranded Pakistanis in different camps that are still waiting to go back to Pakistan. Also, Bangladesh has not solved everything in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. There is an alarming rise of Maoist movement in Nepal. The Hindu-Muslim riot in the Indian state of Guiarat has reached a tragic proportion. All this leaves the possibility of growing ethnic conflicts in the region. Apart from these, the rise of extremism, racial hatred and proliferation of small arms are some of the burning issues in our

There's another threat: the "new war" which began full-scale after September 11. The element of "terrorism" has not only affected the West, it has also touched the South Asian region. Failure in tackling "terrorism" would mean a doom for the region. There has to be well thought-out measures to be implemented while eliminating terrorist groups from this region. The solution to "terrorism" lies in tackling the terrorists networks their

"Good governance" is another aspect to ensure a country's - for that matter, the region's economic and social development. Good governance is related to quality, performance, transparency, performance and effectiveness of the governments in South Asia. As Ammara Durrani, an Assistant Editor of The News, said: 'Governance today is a multi-faceted business that involves a number of stakeholders. In Pakistan, most stakeholders have well-defined policy agendas on which they are working. However, it appears that the work is progressing without policy co-ordination."

Accountability at the top, independent judicial system, freedom of thoughts and expression and freedom of choice have to be ensured for every citizen in respective countries. A country needs to have peace in order to develop. And the culture of peace depends on pluralism, the rule of law and the respect for authority. Sustainable economic growth and prosperity are subject to good governance. South Asian countries have a long

way to go in this respect. If there's one "commonality" among the South Asian peoples, it's undoubtedly "poverty". No amount of nuclear wealth would justify South Asia's destitute image all over the world. Over the past decade, South Asia has been among the world's fastest growing regions in many respects. Yet it remains among the most impoverished. With half a billion of its people living on less than a dollar a day, the region is home to 40 per cent of the world's poor.

The poverty level throughout South Asia has changed little over the past decade which is both a cause and consequence of the region's low level of human development, and in particular the low status afforded to women. Despite improvements in education and health services, South Asia has the world's highest adult illiteracy rate and one-third of the world's maternal deaths. More than half of the region's children under 5 years are malnourished. Environmental degradation, inadequate infrastructure and social exclusion are among the many other obstacles to future growth and poverty reduction.

The South Asian countries must also work collectively in economic co-operation in order to come out as a powerful region. Free movements of capitals, skills, goods and persons within the region could really open

up vistas for harnessing intrinsic potentials and capaci-

The ultimate redemption for us certainly lies in winning poverty in all the countries of the region. Experts suggested ways out of this situation. Of them, the European Union has been suggested as the best example. If South Asia could emulate the EU, it could perhaps be possible to make a dent in our constraints.

But will the EU model work in South Asia? Should more economic and political authority be invested in the SAARC? Or are there too many cultural and political differences in the region to be overcome? Will it be right to suggest a union when at a time SAARC model doesn't even work properly?

Germany in Europe is not the monolithic giant India is in South Asia, nor is France as militarily weak as Pakistan. But if Germany can make peace with an erstwhile bitter enemy and not reclaim Alsace and Lorraine, therein is a lesson for all of us.

For us, the only barrier in the way of a united South Asia is Indo-Pak tension. In just 50 years peoples of India and Pakistan have been taught to hate each other to an extent that the fact that they have lived together for over a thousand years seems irrelevant.

A united South Asia would have a fantastic influence on every member. Within ourselves we have a market so huge that we don't even need the rest of the world. Not to mention the billions of dollars India and Pakistan will save in their defence budgets. If the whole region was to unite Kashmir would cease to be an issue and both sides can claim victory.

All SAARC countries barring Pakistan already have cordial relations, for instance India and Nepal have an open border, despite the fact that there is a significant difference between the two peoples.

However, the western model may not necessarily work in the east. But there is possibility to work together for the betterment of the region. This can be only achieved if all the South Asian nations learn to respect each other. Cooperation will turn our weakness and poverty to our strength.

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### A year after

King Gyanendra's reign has got off to a rocky start

CK LAL writes from Kathmandu

HEN the serpenthooded Shah throne was dusted out for the ascension of King Gyanendra at Hanuman Dhoka last year, the future of the dynasty had never looked so uncertain. A shocked and confused populace was unwilling to accept the official explanation of the Narayanhiti massacre. Doubts were openly raised about the fate of an institution that had imploded from its own neuroses.

In a cunning bid to cash in on the popular disenchantment, Dr Baburam Bhattarai wrote an incendiary op-ed piece for Kantipur. There were riots in the city, a curfew had to be imposed, and the army was deployed to restore order. When the Royal Commission constituted to investigate the killings submitted its report, it was received with scepticism bordering on derision. In the popular imagination, royalty came to be associated with the consumption of an "unidentified black substance" and Speaker Taranath Ranabhatt's "bhatatata" became an onomatopoeia of the times and passed into folk-

It's just been one short year since the brutal murders of the king and his immediate family. But it already reads like a page from history. Amazing, but true: people want to put the deaths behind them and get on with their lives. The king is once again back at the top of the power pyramid in the country, and nobody wants to taint the venerated institution with the blood of the Naravanhiti massacreespecially when the other institutions of state have turned out to be moral pygmies. Many desperately want to believe that the king is their saviour. How the mighty have fallen.

The Royal Nepal Army lost face when it failed to save the life of its Supreme Commander-in-Chief. The enemy, as it happened, was not outside the palace walls, but within. The Holleri fiasco then exposed the weakness of the defence establishment and the contradictions in our civilian-military relations. After that came Ghorahi, which shattered the illusion of the invincibility of the military, and despite later successes against the rebels, the debacle at Mangalsen was proof that this was not going to be as clean and swift as the government had hoped it would be.

The media, lawmakers, the graft-busters and the judiciary soon got into a wrangle, ostensibly over a draft law meant to check corruption. Whether the exercise helped improve the Bill is debatableUpper House lawmaker Roop Jyoti, among others, has his reservations on the act that was later passed (see "Guilty until proven innocent," p7). But the unseemly episode has tarnished the reputation of the insti-

tutions involved. The main opposition UML won the race for infamy when it disrupted the winter parliamentary session, managing to prevent even a single sitting.

Hounded by media, chased by the opposition, undermined by the instruments of the government, and hassled by his own party-members, Girija Prasad Koirala walked out of Singha Darbar more in disgust than disgrace. Among other things, Koirala's resignation proved the powerlessness of the prime minister in a government that is supposed to have been modelled after the Westminster system.

For a section of Nepali society, including the intelligentsia, the Maoists had been a source of hope. The insurgents presented themselves as an alternative to the corrupt rule of Singha Darbar and politicians in general, and the gullible urban Nepali middle class bought the promise of utopia. But the Maoists squandered this support by using the ceasefire to regroup, reorganise, and rearm; and then in November wrecked any hope for peace by taking on

In this enveloping darkness, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's decision to impose a state of emergency was the final blow. Now, nobody other than the Maoists and the members of the security forces have any standing outside Kathmandu Valley, and a few other urban pockets of the country. The dissolution of the Lower House of parliament, the re-imposition of the state of emergency, and the relegation of the Deuba government to a partyless status all indicate the complete depoliticisation of governance.

Forget democracy, politics itself has lost its shine. It is doubtful if even Deuba believes his own promise of holding elections in November. If any voting can take place in the heavily-guarded district headquarters, it will be little more than an action replay of the Museveni-Musharraf model. It may not have been by designlet's give Deuba the benefit of the doubtbut the fact is that power is now back at the palace. Freed of parliamentary oversight and cut loose from the party, the prime minister lacks the moral authority to enforce the rule of law in the country. Despite the facade of constitutionality, it's back to rule by decree.

All eyes are now on Nirmal Niwas, the private residence of the constitutional monarch. As the king comes out of his year of mourning this week, the country awaits his next step with bated breath. Both the extreme right and the extreme left should be

CK Lal is a senior journalist in Nepal and this piece is printed by arrangement with The Nepali Times.

### SRI LANKA

# 'Peace train' carries hope

FEIZAL SAMATH

→ HILDREN waved, women washing clothes on stones alongside village streams looked up with amusement, and rice farmers with sarongs tucked at their waists raised their heads as Sri Lanka's first peace train chugged toward the north of this island nation. To many residents, the train, colorfully painted with peace signs and symbols hoping to raise Sri Lanka's peace process to higher levels, reflected little more than curiosity. But in weeks, perhaps months, according to the organizers, the diesel-powered train to the northern town of Vavuniya, 250 kilometers north of the capital Colombo will mean much more. "People on the railroad and at railway stations will hopefully recognize this as Sri Lanka's peace train and what it symbolizes," says Sujeevan Perera, program director of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust (NTT), which organized the project with financial assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) It is an encouraging step in the government's efforts

to end the ethnic conflict, which has raged for nearly 20 vears and cost some 64.000 lives since 1983. Since that year, Tamil Tigers guerrillas have been fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils, who have accused successive majority Sinhalese-led governments of depriving minority communities of equality in education, land use and jobs. The rebels have said they are prepared to drop their demand for an independent homeland if the government is ready to provide the Tamils sufficient powers to run the country's northern and eastern regions, where most of the Tamils live. A ceasefire has been in effect since December between the government and the rebels and both sides are now getting ready for peace talks due to begin next month in

While there has been growing concern about the five-month delay in the actual holding of peace talks (now set to begin in Thailand next month), there is also relief, particularly in the capital and the countryside where most of the recruits for the country's armed forces come from. "Many villagers are thankful for the tranquillity in village homes as there are fewer sons and daughters coming [home] in body bags. There is relief all around." explains Sunil Shantha, a railway employee and leader of a railway union, who was travelling on the

Jehan Perera, political columnist and an activist attached to the National Peace Council, a privatelyfunded peace promoter, says that an estimated 1,500 lives have been saved during the past five months of relative calm since December 24 when the rebels declared a unilateral ceasefire. "We normally have an average of 10 people [a day] dying as a result of the war. This is a tremendous saving in terms of human life due to the ceasefire." he says. Residents in Colombo, while doubtful about whether the truce will last, are relieved to be able to walk the streets without fear of suicide bombers or rebel attacks. Roadblocks have been lifted and checkpoints reduced. The last rebel attack here was the pre-dawn raid last year on an air force base adjoining the country's international airport.

Trading has also perked up as Sri Lanka's onceindifferent business community raises the stakes for peace by playing a leading role. Unilever, the multinational home and personal care company which is now Sri Lanka's biggest firm, told a business meeting on Tuesday that turnover - after a disappointing 2001 - in the first quarter this year had risen sharply by 40 percent. The business community led by the chambers of commerce and Sri Lanka First, a group of chambers and business association promoting peace, has been a

driving force in the current peace process. Unlike in the past when the businesses fought shy of involvement in the peace process and said they had no role in politics, the private sector has, since the July rebel attack on the airport, reversed its role and led the charge for peace. It is widely believed to be responsible - and in a big way for helping and funding the business-friendly United National Party-led coalition to its sweeping win at parliamentary polls in December.

In the past few months, delegations of businesspersons have been visiting the war-torn town of Jaffna and discussing plans to set up supermarkets, hotels and revive trade with the once-shut north. Business sentiment has never seen such a boom in the north. But the lack of a wider civil society movement apart from smaller initiatives like the peace train - in promoting peace is seen as a serious drawback in the current process. "We need to create a civil movement toward peace and that is absent unlike in previous occasions when there was a peace process," notes Rev. Baddegama Samitha, a moderate Buddhist monk from a temple at Baddegama in southern Sri Lanka. He said that due to the peace process being shrouded in secrecy, people were unaware of what was happening and showed little interest. "There is a public vacuum and that's not a good thing".

People's participation is essential if the peace process is to succeed," the monk, who is also an opposition parliamentarian, said while travelling on the peace train. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe's strategy has been to clear the bottlenecks before resorting to peace talks with the rebels. Since coming to office, the government has lifted an economic embargo, allowed food and medicines into rebel-controlled territory, and opened with rebel consent - the main highway to Jaffna that had been closed for years. Most of these issues

while talks were often bogged down the discussions. Filmmaker Vasantha Obeysekera, also on the peace train, said of the conflict: "This is a futile war. Sinhalese youth are getting

have in the past come as demands from the rebels

killed. Tamil youth are getting killed. No one benefits. The well-known filmmaker, who has produced films and documentaries on peace and conflict focusing on the futility of war, noted that the younger generation is far less communally minded than older folk. "The older generation is imprisoned by caste, creed and race conflicts and they find it hard to alter their views." He blamed Colombo's intelligentsia for "being cowards" without a backbone" for failing to put pressure on politicians to end the conflict. "Except for some artistes like us and some intellectuals, few people in Colombo are ready to stand up and say enough is enough."

The bulk of the country's armed forces come from poor, rural homes while the children of middle and upper class urban homes rarely join the military. Even if they do so, it is at a higher rank and they are unlikely to be in the line of fire. Somasunderam Sriskandaraiah, a 60-year Tamil government pensioner, said the peace train gave him some hope but he doubts whether the peace will last. "It has never worked in the past," he said, looking out of a window of one of the carriages. Another Tamil woman passenger, who declined to be named, was also not too optimistic. "I can't see this [peace process] getting us anywhere. I hope I am

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### **PAKISTAN**

# Is it suffering from a crisis of governance?

**AMMARA DURRANI** 

F the various definitions offered for the term, it appears that experts maintain a clear distinction between the terms 'rule' and 'governance'; furthermore, governance can be of two types i.e. good and poor or bad. In the first instance, while there seems to a certain amount of distaste associated with the term 'rule' in the West (perhaps due to its totalitarian undertones), governance is generally understood to be 'the act, manner or functioning' of institutions that form government. Essentially, it 'reflects a judgement on the quality of government'. The UNDP defines governance as the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences'.

The qualitative judgement of governance, however, is calculated in the second instance, whereby 'good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable; it promotes the rule of law...it ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources.' The World Bank's understanding of the concept includes 'an efficient public service; an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts; the accountable administration of public funds; ...respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government; a pluralistic institutional structure, and a free press'.

### A plethora of perspectives

Because of its vast coverage of modern polities, the number and nature of stake-holders involved in governance has both increased and diversified in recent years. In fact, it is the rapidly increasing socio-political and economic complexities of the developing countries as a result of globalisation that has brought states under the microscope in order to judge their ability to govern. At the same time, one of the key features of globalisation has been the introduction and empowerment of non-state actors in matters of governance. Thus, in developing countries like Pakistan, the state is no longer viewed as the whole-sole agent of administrative power; the market, international donors and the civil society in the form of civil voluntary initiatives (CVIs) ie NGOs have considerably encroached upon the role traditionally assumed by the state. Here, I will not dwell on how sovereign is the contemporary Pakistani State in the presence of these non-state actors, which is the subject of another discussion. Nevertheless, one can safely assert that the presence of non-state actors in Pakistan is real and it is playing a significant role in the country's governance-a role that has yet to be deciphered and contextualised in its entirety.

From definitions cited above, it is clear that good governance draws upon democracy as its defining political philosophy, and that the qualitative

distinction of 'good' and 'bad' is important in calculating why some democracies work and some do not. Although there are some who believe that the quality and quantity of governance can be judged soundly, irrespective of the political system in application. Pakistan has a checkered history of governments see-sawing between military and democratic rules. Yet what has remained constant is a strong state vis-a-vis a relatively weak civil society. Furthermore, the state until more recently, assumed the two key roles of 'national security' and 'development' as its raison d'etre, while its administrative structures, legislative and policy frameworks have drawn heavily upon the country's colonial legacy.

In consonance with the global economic changes, the decade of the 1990s has been a watershed in Pakistan's history, in that apart from political experimentation with a fledgling democracy, the state has had to vigorously implement the structural adjustment programmes (adopted in the 1980s) with the blessings of international donors. Accordingly, the state's principal roles have also experienced a change. While national security still figures prominently on its agenda (in fact, 9/11 has provided a perfect opportunity to make it the primary agenda), economic growth and development have now become the chief concerns of the present regime-and understandably so, given Pakistan's teetering economic conditions and pathetic social welfare system.

With an increasing focus on economic growth and social development. governance in Pakistan is largely seen in these two contexts, with the country's economists, developmentalists, civil society proponents and donor bodies gaining significance in the official discourse and policymaking, that had hitherto been the subject of state monopoly. Furthermore, alternative perspectives such as gender and corporate power are also striving for their presence to be felt.

It is interesting to note, however, that while the state is receptive to the participation of non-state actors in 'development' initiatives aiming service delivery and awareness raising in certain 'non-controversial' areas like population planning, poverty alleviation, etc., it does not appear to approve non-state initiatives in areas of advocacy focused and rights based issues, that motivate people to articulate their concerns for policy change, reform and democratic assertions. And here, I believe, lies a paradox that the issue of good governance currently faces in Pakistan, with the result being that all state initiatives seem to meet either stagnation or ultimate failure. A recent announcement by the government to close its much-touted Social Action Programme (SAP) after a decade of operation and a funding exceeding the figure of \$10bn is a strong case in point.

### Intractable issues and excessive expectations

By the 1980s, it became evident in the industrialised North that, governability had become harder; as the range of problems that governments are expected to deal with increased, states' capacity to solve them reduced in turn. Even the market economy solution of the '60s had not delivered as earlier presumed. While citizens' expectations increased many-fold, resistance to government authority from a variety of pressure/interest groups also rose steadily. The North responded with a massive drive for decentralisation, and deregulation in a bid to reduce state role in governance. The results of the North's attempts at reforming its governance patterns are a subject for another in debate. The point for our consideration here is that what we currently see in countries like Pakistan is a repeat performance of state's attempts at readjusting itself to the demands of a globalised world,

Rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, market competition and pressure, population increase, socio-economic inequality and deprivation, and emergence of a politically mature civil society are some of the macro issues that Pakistani State now faces as it struggles to maintain its traditionally authoritative stance. And while the pressure mounts from external actors (global market, donors, and multilateral regimes traditional allies) and domestic stake-holders (political parties, trade unions, agro-producers, consumer markets and civil society groups) to address their grievances and provide solutions, new threats to political and economic stability continue to emerge. In recent years, Pakistan has faced some of the worst domestic political, ethnic and sectarian violence, making some argue that perhaps the enemy lies within, and that the parameters of national security need to be redefined. Increasing environmental degradation and inter-provincial friction over resource allocation and distribution poses a huge question mark on the federalist model of nationalism that the country's pioneers had envisaged for it. And the domestic fall-out of Pakistan's post-9/11 stance in the international society has proved that the public is increasingly critical of the state's foreign policy aims and objectives

What, then, does good governance entail if it is to be implemented in

In one of his earlier research papers, Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Dr Ishrat Husain identified seven pillars of good governance in Pakistan, which need to perform effectively in order to make governance a success. These include 1) Parliamentary Committees; 2) Central Bank; 3) Auditor General of Pakistan; 4) Pakistan Revenue Service; 5) Federal/Provincial Public Service Commissions; 6) Federal/Provincial Ombudsman; and 7) Federal Election Commission. These pillars, however, present only one part of the picture; more so, they represent a state-centric, top-down approach at the expense of the exclusion of non-state actors. The introduction of the Devolution of Power plan in August last year may have been a genuine attempt at relegating power to the grass roots level, but it has further complicated the political landscape of the country. Due to scarcity of resources and trained personnel, and existing ambiguities about the powers and responsibilities given to the local administrators, reports have already started pouring in about discontent within and inefficiency of the newly elected local bodies

Since coming to power, the present government has attempted at undertaking an extremely ambitious agenda by identifying and tackling the vari-

ous problem areas. From reviewing its proportions with the help of right sizing to attacking corruption through a controversial accountability drive; from introducing new law and order set-ups to constitutional and judicial reforms; and from attacking poverty and disease to distributing education to all, inculcating a gender perspective in policy areas, and declaring a 'freer' press-the list of projects and plans is too lengthy to be discussed here in detail. Yet, development only appears to be progressing in pockets. Could it be that Pakistan is suffering from a 'crisis of governance'?

Implementation through synergy

Noted Pakistani economist, S Akbar Zaidi observes that: "Not only is governance about how governments function, but it is a multi-relational concept of society as a whole. One cannot argue that governments per se are inefficient and corrupt, and have no respect for law-though this is true in most underdeveloped countries-without examining the links with the nature of society in which government functions. We need to examine the level and structure of economic development and of society, the historical and cultural traditions of particular societies, and the influence of the government on civil society, before any concept of governance emerges.

As pointed earlier, governance today is a multi-faceted business that involves a number of stakeholders. In Pakistan, most stakeholders have well-defined policy agendas on which they are working. However, it appears that the work is progressing without policy coordination. There is a lack of what Robert Putnam identified as the state-society 'synergy'. This syneray points at 'the significance of the need of cooperative and productive interplay between the state, the market, the NGOs and the donor agencies to co-produce development'. However, in the case of Pakistan, Arshed Hossain Bhatti notes that: "Citizens are missing in action from the actual scene of development planning and execution. They only figure as cold and mutable...reference in planning texts and development discourse.'

Good governance of future

Despite the liberal and progressive facade of the present military regime of Pakistan, there is clear evidence that the state's perception of its civil society continues to be plagued with mistrust and authoritarian behaviour. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the on-going structural adjustment programmes-though aimed at sustainable development and economic growth with a human face-are more a result of international donor pressure than any real political will on the part of the state to engage its people in a neaningful relationship of governance.

Unless bridges between the state and the various groups comprising the society are not strengthened and unless they are not frequented by a regular two-way traffic, good governance may well remain a dream for Pakistan.

Ammara is an Assitant Editor of The News of Pakistan. This is an abridge version of her paper presented at the conference on "Shaping the Future: A South Asian Dialogue", May 25-29, 2002, Sri Lanka