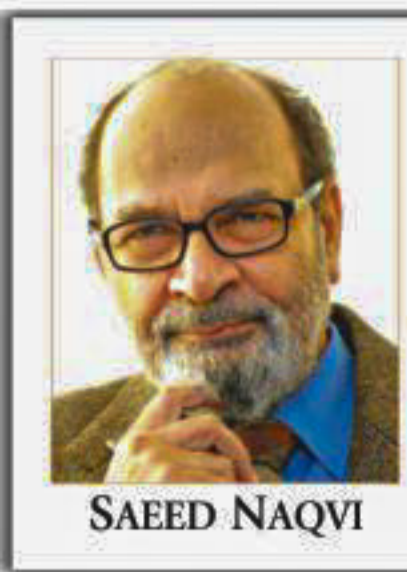


Imran Khan has taken a leaf out of Josh Malihabadi's book



PAKISTANI Prime Minister Imran Khan has taken a leaf out of the great Urdu poet Josh Malihabadi's book.

The famous poet wrote: "Badlay ki rasm jinsse wafa mein haram hai

Ehsaan ek shareef tareen inteqam hai" (For gentlemen of conscience, revenge is an odious response. When the enemy expects the worst, do him a favour—that's noble revenge).

Whenever India-Pakistan relations take a turn, for better or for worse, animated discussions with Inder Gujral (Inder bhai, as I called him) come to mind. He would dampen my optimism by giving me a Xerox copy of the latest editorial of *Nawa-i-Waqt*. "Read this on your way back home. When this changes, Indo-Pak relations will improve."

The headline Urdu newspaper was launched in Lahore in 1940 in direct opposition to Khizar Hayat Khan's Unionist Party which was stoutly opposed to the two-nation theory. Khizar Hayat belonged to a distinguished line of landowning aristocrats, whose liberalism derived from his exposure to western education, beginning with Aitchison College. Hameed Nizami, the founder of *Nawa-i-Waqt*, was by comparison more homespun, a journalist and a Muslim League activist who worked for a Muslim homeland. The idea had to be hurriedly buttressed because progressive rivals like Saiyid Sibte Hasan, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Dr KM Ashraf were making inroads with the leftist publication *Opinion*.

The progressive Muslim line was more in harmony with Jawaharlal Nehru's derivative

of Fabian Socialism, tailored for Congress purposes. It was Nehru's larger-than-life persona that enabled him to singlehandedly carry the project for as far as he could in his lifetime. It began to unravel soon after him.

It is the metaphor of our times that the world's largest statue is not his but that of his senior colleague and the first Deputy Prime Minister of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. And, to rub salt in the Congress' wounds, this statue has been built not by the Congress but by the RSS.

Nehru and his cohorts, the ICS variety, were averse to a Hindu India because they were averse to an image of a *mufassil*, un-grand India. So they accepted half of the two-nation theory: Pakistan, a theocratic state. "Secular" India was essential for Nehru's other great passion. That was the only way to keep Kashmir.

Also, secular India was an advertisement, a blandishment. A thriving, secular state, without any discrimination would be a foil to a theocratic state. It was to guard against this "foil" that *Nawa-i-Waqt* had to fortify itself up as the "guardian of Pakistan's ideology". *Nawa-i-Waqt* Editor Majid Nizami (he died in 2014) explained why the newspaper had self-consciously adopted a "pro-American, anti-communist" stance from the outset. "Nehru's socialism, his proximity to the Soviet Union and the sprinkling of Communist intellectuals around him."

Indira Gandhi split the Congress in 1969 and flirted with the Communist Party of India. This invited a huge backlash by a "gathbandhan" (coalition) behind Jayaprakash Narayan's or JP's Bihar movement in 1974, leading, after a series of mishaps, to the Emergency in 1975 and Indira Gandhi's rout in the 1977 general elections.

When she returned to power in 1980, she was a chastened politician. She fought the



"Pakistan will release captured Indian Air Force pilot Abhinandan Varthaman on Friday as a 'peace gesture'," Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Jammu elections in 1983 on a communal, anti-Sikh, anti-minority platform. This appeared to her to be a promising path. In June 1984, Operation Blue Star was launched; the army moved into the holiest shrine of the Sikhs. In October '84, a Sikh bodyguard shot her dead. Rajiv Gandhi won the December '84 elections by a massive margin—Congress won 411 seats out of 542 in the Lok Sabha.

Obviously, the sympathy created by Indira Gandhi's assassination was a factor but the Congress interpreted the massive mandate differently. It was Hindu consolidation against minority communalism. The concept of Hindu consolidation, in other words, became kosher on both sides of the aisle.

In competitive communalism, temple-hopping, cow-worshipping, cow-urine-bottling, keeping Muslims out of bounds

from election meetings, throwing young Muslims in jails without trial...in all of these the BJP and the Congress are neck to neck. But it must be strongly asserted that cow vigilantism, love jihad, *ghar wapsi*, changing the names of places and suchlike are areas in which the BJP has left the Congress sleeping by the lamp post. In her first appearance at the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, otherwise a sensible lady, decided to flutter the flag of Hindu cultural nationalism. She said that 185 million Muslims in India speak many languages including Bhojpuri. It must be amnesia of a very high order since she forgot to mention Urdu.

On Pakistan and Kashmir, the approaches of the two parties vary marginally but in the post-9/11 atmosphere of Islamophobia, both are

quite snug with this global mood. In the Indian context, this acquires a tone of deep saffron. This saffron cannot be softened because a large percentage of communalism has been spread by Pakistan-hating anchors of Indian channels. They occasionally toss in Asaduddin Owaisi by way of variety. (Let me emphasise—there are some very laudable exceptions.)

Because I remembered how Inder Gujral repeatedly directed me to *Nawa-i-Waqt* editorials, I Googled that paper's editorial page soon after IAF claimed to have destroyed Jaish-e-Mohammed assets in Balakot.

"Maharaj, aag se na khelo, aman ko raasta do, Ilaqai ghubat ko khatam karney mein haath batao, warna ghamand samet, bhasm ho jao ge" (Maharaj, don't play with fire, keep the door open for peace, join hands to fight regional poverty, otherwise you will be incinerated along with your pride).

Around the time I was reading the edit, an anchor on one channel was growling: "Yeh khooni darinde jhoot bolte hain" (The bloodthirsty (Pak) beasts lie all the time). In the Gujral framework, what should Imran Khan say?

Nawa-i-Waqt's anti-"Bharat" stance was to consolidate the theocratic state against India's proselytising, liberal secularism. Now *Nawa-i-Waqt* can tone down because we are well on our way to becoming a Hindu state. Hindus don't proselytise; they don't convert. But cultivating a hatred for Pakistan, Kashmiris, Muslims is a means to "pursue" the project of Hindu consolidation. Only "pursue", not "achieve", mind you, because consolidating a multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-religious sub-continent will remain a work in progress till the cows come home. The easier way to consolidate is, ironically, mentioned in the *Nawa-i-Waqt* edit quoted above.

Saeed Naqvi is a senior Indian journalist, television commentator and interviewer.

Slavery is not a thing of the past

It still exists today affecting millions



WHILE natural hazards like hurricanes, exacerbated by climate change, are causing people to migrate, it's conflict, violence and persecution that have forced more than 68.5 million people from their homes today, exposing them to higher risks and increased vulnerability, especially women and children.

Vulnerable people on the move face massive risks and uncertainty to find safety and opportunity for themselves and their families. Unfortunately, in many cases they are taken advantage of and their rights ignored, forced to work in terrible conditions for little, or in some cases, no money.

Elsewhere, 120,000 people crossed the Central Mediterranean in 2017—the migrant route with most deaths recorded in the world and nearly 2,900 migrants recorded killed or missing on that route in the same year.

Most of them travelled on smugglers' boats departing from Libya, Tunisia or Egypt, risking their lives in search of safety and opportunity in Italy and beyond.

The reality of the harrowing journey in search of safety in Europe came into sharp focus when three-year-old Alan Kurdi's (initially reported as Aylan Kurdi) image made headlines when he drowned in the Mediterranean after fleeing Syria with his family.

Recently, a little refugee boy from Mali also drowned in the Mediterranean. In preparation for the ill-fated trip, he had stitched a school report to his clothes to show European authorities what a good student he was.



Migrants travelling on the Libya-Italy route—the most dangerous way to cross the Mediterranean.

PHOTO: IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

In the Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, thousands of Central Americans are arriving at the US-Mexico border, fleeing domestic and gang violence, state corruption and impunity, climate-induced droughts, and economic hardship in their home countries.

We see women bearing the brunt of violence and poverty with high levels of sexual and gender-based violence, and alarming levels of femicide. It is not uncommon for a girl and her family to be targeted and even killed by gangs if she refuses to become a gang member's sex slave.

And once at the border, children have died due to the difficult journey they are taking and as a result of medical care not being

available on time.

In the US, there are countless examples of workers being exploited, many of whom are migrants. Oxfam published a report detailing how the poultry industry exploits vulnerable people who have few other options other than taking on the most dangerous and thankless jobs in the poultry plants.

Because of their precarious situations, most workers are afraid to speak out or do anything that might jeopardise their jobs. Oxfam reported that some workers were forced to wear adult diapers because they did not have adequate bathroom breaks.

As part of Oxfam's Behind the Barcodes campaign, Oxfam has also worked with labourers in Southeast Asia and elsewhere for

more rights and protections. In the seafood industry, workers find themselves in conditions akin to modern slavery.

Female migrant workers especially, who perform jobs like peeling the shrimps for cheap shrimp cocktail you can buy at your grocery store, are often subjected to illegal recruitment and have their travel documents and wages confiscated.

The UN and the international community do acknowledge the plight of modern slavery and the challenges migrant workers face around the world, but more needs to be done.

Unfortunately, instead of helping address and resolve the displacement crisis with thoughtful, humane policies, and a genuine sense of shared responsibility, too many leaders are using scare tactics and depicting migrants and refugees as violent criminals and terrorists, when they are in fact the ones fleeing violence and also have much to offer to their new communities.

These leaders around the globe are doing this with a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law, human rights and global norms that are meant to protect the most vulnerable amongst us.

This was demonstrated in the Trump administration's inhumane policies separating children from their families and in trying to deny women, who are victims of domestic violence, asylum in the United States.

There has been some progress to help migrants and refugees from the UN. In 2016, President Obama hosted a UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants. The Summit led to countries committing to a USD 4.5 billion increase in global humanitarian funding. Following the Summit at the UN General Assembly, 193 UN member states agreed to coordinate and cooperate to improve the

global response to the migration crisis.

They agreed to do such things as ease pressures on countries that host most refugees, like Bangladesh, Uganda, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. They committed to building refugees' self-reliance through access to education and livelihoods, expanding access to resettlement and other complementary pathways, and fostering conditions for refugees to voluntarily return home.

They also agreed to start working on a Global Compact for Refugees and a Global Compact for Migration that was recently endorsed at the end of last year.

The compacts include such things as recognition of the need for meaningful participation by refugees and host communities in decision-making and commitments to uphold the human rights of all migrants regardless of status.

On the downside, the compacts aren't binding so there is no way to legally hold endorers accountable. And, the United States retreated from its leadership role in protecting refugees and withdrew from the Global Compact on Migration.

Overall, the mass migration taking place globally presents opportunities but also huge risks for those who aren't protected along the way or when they arrive.

Many think of slavery as a thing of the past, but it still exists today, affecting millions around the world, as people make desperate decisions for a better life.

We need more protections and more implementation of the systems we have in place to achieve a more safe and just world for everyone.

Shannon Scribner is Associate Director of Humanitarian Programs and Policy at Oxfam America. Copyright: Inter Press Service

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

RODNEY KING
March 3, 1991

FOOTAGE OF LOS ANGELES POLICE OFFICERS SEVERELY BEATING RODNEY KING CAUSES A GLOBAL OUTCRY

The acquittal of the police officers involved sparked the Los Angeles riots in 1992.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	34 Rink makeup	8 Senator supporter
1 Stands	35 Flow out	9 Loot
6 Mall businesses	36 Jargon ending	10 Took the wheel
11 Overture	37 Trafalgar, for one	14 Grant of films
12 Be effective	40 Decree	19 Exact match
13 Holsteins, e.g.	41 "Message received"	22 Dad, in slang
15 Small bill	42 Foot parts	23 Trig functions
16 Criminalise	43 Giraffe features	24 Guacamole base
17 Brewery product		25 Plague
18 Rankles	DOWN	26 Trailer attachments
20 Combat	1 No longer plagued	28 Baseball's Ty
21 Method	2 by	30 Scots and Irish
22 Newspaper part	3 Silly	31 Release
23 Plane part	2 Pigs' places	32 Land in the sea
26 Muscularly fit	4 Go wrong	33 Jury members
27 Kitchen fixture	5 Tofu ingredient	38 Perfect serve
28 Beat walker	6 Digitises, as a page	39 Summit
29 Lawn material	7 Crude home	
30 Primrose variety		

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

I'LL GET YOU, BEETLE!!

GREAT! NOW! WALKER

SORRY, I HAD TO TIE MY SHOE

WELL, HURRY UP, I GOTTA KEEP GOING TILL I CATCH YOU!

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

MOM! OUR SCHOOL IS HAVING A TALENT SHOW!

HOW EXCITING!

NOW I JUST NEED TO THINK OF AN ACT.

WELL, WHAT IS IT YOU DO BEST?

INSULT HAMMIE WITHOUT HIM CATCHING ON?

LET'S KEEP THINKING.