

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**  
Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**  
Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**  
Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**  
(mszk786@gmail.com)  
Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**  
(afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
**Islamabad Office:** Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.  
**Karachi office:** Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.  
Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.  
**Lahore Office:** 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.  
**Email:** spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com  
**Whatsapp:** 0346-5008408

## World urged to intervene for peace in Kashmir

Chairman Jammu Kashmir Peace and Justice Organization (JKPO), Tanveer-ul-Islam emphasized that Kashmiri Muslims were being subjected to systemic human rights violations, including arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances for decades.

He vehemently condemned draconian measures such as arbitrary detentions and violent repression, along with the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution, affecting the special autonomous status of the Jammu and Kashmir region.

Tracing the history of the Kashmir conflict, he highlighted that the denial of Kashmiris' right to decide their future with free will gave birth to this dispute since the partition of British India in 1947.

Tanveer highlighted the importance of creating awareness among international community and civil society of influential nations about the gross human rights violations in IIOJK.

He called upon the international community to take resolute action to redress the ongoing crisis and safeguard the fundamental rights of Kashmiri Muslims, asserting that finding a just solution to the Kashmir conflict was moral obligation of world nations to bring regional stability.

Speaking on the occasion, President Pak-Kashmir Solidarity Council, Syed Arif Bahar, underscored the need of untangling the intricacies surrounding Kashmir, prioritizing the voices and narratives of Kashmiri masses in any discourse. Professor Shahid Hassan Mir highlighted the need for international intervention in stopping human rights abuses in Kashmir, advocating for global accountability and solidarity.

Muhammad Tahir Tabasum, President Institute of Peace and Development, voiced apprehension regarding the political situation in Kashmir and the travails of political detainees, calling for their immediate release.

"The plight of political detainees in Kashmir serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing human rights debacle. The release of political detainees is not only an issue of justice but also a pivotal stride towards reinstating peace and stability in the region," he added.

Other distinguished participants of the webinar underscored the significance of inclusivity in the peace process, advocating for the empowerment of Kashmiri stakeholders and redressing underlying grievances of the Kashmiri population.

They implored the international community to demonstrate solidarity with the oppressed people of IIOJK, championing their rights, justice, and dignity.

Moreover, the participants of the seminar adopted a resolution appealing the international community for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue based on the right to self-determination in the broader interest of peace and development of the region.

# Unlocking the Doors to Peace Innovative Approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

**Dr. Muhammad  
Shahzad Ashfaq**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most prolonged and engrained conflicts in the world with roots dating back to the late 19th century. The conflict is characterized by deep historical, religious and territorial disputes that have resulted in decades of violence, bloodshed or suffering for both Israelis and Palestinians. The search for a peaceful resolution to the conflict has been elusive, with many attempts at negotiation and mediation failing to produce a lasting and sustainable peace agreement. However, despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles to peace, there are innovative approaches that could potentially unlock the doors to peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These approaches involve thinking outside of the box, seeking alternative pathways to peace, and engaging in new ways of dialogue or cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians. One innovative approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the concept of two independent states. Rather than maintaining the current single-nation solution, which predicts a separate Palestinian state alongside Israel, will involve the creation of a single democratic state that would

involve both Israeli and Palestinian territories. Peacemaking in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the concept of "Track II diplomacy." This involves engaging with non-governmental actors, such as civil society organizations, religious leaders, and academics to resolve the conflict. These people working outside of the traditional diplomatic channels track II diplomacy will create new opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, helping to generate creative solutions to the deep-rooted issues that have plagued the peace process. Track II diplomacy, and technological tools, it possible to break down the barriers of fear and mistrust that have long divided Israelis and Palestinians, paving the way for a more peaceful environment for both peoples.

This approach would emphasize equality, mutual recognition, and integration between Israelis and Palestinians, rather than maintaining one-nation identities and boundaries. These initiatives like people-to-people programs have shown promise in building bridges between Israelis and Palestinians and fostering understanding and cooperation. These individuals are involved with civil society organizations working together on projects that promote dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. People engaging in both states Israelis and Palestinians will build personal relationships, break down stere-



otypes and create opportunities for collaboration or peace building.

The conflict (Israeli-Palestinian) has been a longstanding issue that has plagued the Middle East for decades. The hostility and violence between the two sides have resulted in countless deaths, destroyed homes, and hindered any prospects for peace in the region. Innovative approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also involve addressing the underlying causes of the conflict, including issues of inequality, discrimination, and injustice. By promoting social and economic equality, and addressing the grievances of both Israelis and Palestinians, a more just and sustainable peace will be achieved. These innovative approaches will involve addressing issues such as land rights, water rights and refugee rights, working towards a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities for both Israelis and Palestinians. Social media platforms and online communication tools will be used to facilitate dialogue between Israelis and

Palestinians, allowing for the exchange of ideas and perspectives in a safe and controlled environment. Virtual reality technology will be used to create immersive experiences that foster empathy and understanding between the two sides.

By leveraging international support, grassroots movements and a commitment to dialogue and cooperation, it is possible to overcome these challenges and pave the way for lasting peace in the region. Unlocking the doors to peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will require innovative thinking, bold initiatives, and a willingness to explore new pathways to reconciliation and cooperation. Embracing sovereignty, economic interdependence, cultural exchange, and technology, there is a real opportunity to break the cycle of violence and build a future based on peace and coexistence. This conflict requires bold and innovative approaches that challenge the status quo to promote cooperation and understanding. While the road to peace may be long and difficult, both sides must continue to seek innovative solutions and build a brighter future for generations to come. It is time for all stakeholders to come together and embrace these innovative approaches will finally put an end to this long-standing conflict.

*Writer is Postdoctoral Fellow in International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan*



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

## Pak Army's notable role in Sports and fostering a healthier society - II

Moreover, sports serve as a unique platform for character development and the acquisition of essential life skills. Involvement in team sports cultivates attributes like teamwork, discipline, perseverance, and leadership. Athletes learn the value of dedication, sacrifice, and diligence as they strive to refine their abilities and attain their objectives. Furthermore, sports instill the capacity to handle triumphs and setbacks with grace, resilience, and sportsmanship, traits transferable to various facets of life, including education, profession, and personal relationships.

Beyond physical advantages, sports exert a profound influence on mental health and emotional well-being. Regular exercise associated with sports triggers the release of endorphins, the "feel-good" hormones, which aid in stress reduction, anxiety alleviation, and depression mitigation. Participation in sports also instills a sense of purpose, enhances self-esteem, and fosters a positive body image. Particularly in team sports, social connections, camaraderie, and support networks flourish, combating loneliness and enhancing overall mental well-being.

Sports possess the remarkable ability to unite people, dismantling barriers and fostering social cohesion. Irrespective of age, gender, or cultural background, sports provide a common platform

for individuals to connect, communicate, and collaborate. Sporting events and competitions nurture a sense of belonging and solidarity, fostering a robust community spirit. From grassroots initiatives to global sporting spectacles, sports bridge divides, celebrate diversity, and promote mutual respect and understanding.

Furthermore, sports offer individuals role models and wellsprings of inspiration. Athletes who excel in their respective disciplines inspire others to pursue excellence, set ambitious goals, and surpass limitations.

These role models epitomize qualities such as commitment, perseverance, and determination, serving as sources of motivation and encouragement. Sports also champion values like fair play, integrity, and respect, imparting invaluable life lessons to individuals across generations.

Undoubtedly, sports play a pivotal role in society, extending far beyond the confines of the playing field. They contribute to physical fitness, character development, mental well-being, and societal integration. Through sports, individuals acquire essential life skills, nurture resilience, and forge a strong sense of identity and belonging.

The interconnection between the military and sports runs deep, serving as a dynamic force that not only enhances the physical preparedness of soldiers but also enriches societal fabric. Throughout nations, armed forces play a pivotal

role in fostering and cultivating sports, leveraging their influence to ignite athleticism, camaraderie, and national pride. At the core of the military's engagement in sports lies the necessity of physical fitness and preparedness. Service members must maintain peak physical condition to effectively carry out their duties. Consequently, the military invests in comprehensive sports programs aimed at elevating the fitness levels of its personnel. These programs encompass a diverse range of activities, spanning from conventional sports like athletics, swimming, and martial arts to specialized training regimens tailored to the requirements of military service. By prioritizing physical fitness, the military not only ensures the readiness of its personnel but also establishes a benchmark of health and well-being for the nation.

The military serves as a fertile ground for the identification and cultivation of talent in sports. Many soldiers demonstrate innate athleticism and potential across various disciplines, from combat sports to endurance events. Acknowledging this reservoir of talent, the military provides avenues for personnel to pursue sports at competitive levels. Specialized training facilities, coaching resources, and financial backing enable promising athletes to refine their skills and represent the armed forces in national and international competitions. Furthermore, the military's emphasis on discipline, commitment, and resilience instills the values essential for athletic excellence, grooming individuals who excel both on the field of play and in their military obligations.

*To be continued*

## Diminishing animal's suffering

**Haleema Sadia**

Animals are suffering all over the world. The biggest reason for this is the overpopulation of humans. The human domination of the world has destroyed the habitats of most animals. Industrial farming, to feed more humans, has also increased the animal's plight. The space available for animals to live a happy life has diminished drastically. Human overpopulation is not only damaging the earth but also other sentient beings which in the end is also damaging to humans themselves. According to the latest studies, over 1 quarter of the world's mammals and over 40 per cent of amphibians are currently on the brink of extinction.

Another reason is the rise of speciesism in humans. Speciesism is the human-held belief that all other species are inferior and therefore they shouldn't be given any moral consideration. The result is that some people are harming animals without any reason and just for the sake of pleasure. Most parents don't admonish their kids for throwing stones at hapless stray dogs. The speciesism was propagated by many thinkers. Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher, said that animals are just 'brute beasts' who exist 'for the sake of man'. Religions like Christianity and most others also awarded unique dignity to men. Descartes said animals are automata and have no souls thus they don't suffer. All of them couldn't provide irrefutable evidence in favour of the views they propounded.

The question is whether animals should be given moral consideration or not. There are two arguments. One is the 'Rationality argument' which says that since homo sapiens is the only specie that is rational, autonomous and self-conscious, hence only their interest should be considered of prime importance. But modern science has given credible evidence of animals evincing many of the qualities that give humans legal rights. The physiological and mental capacities of animals, though rudimentary, are quite similar to humans. Capacities that were once touted as unique to humans, such as developing family ties, solving social problems, expressing a diverse range of emotions, using language etcetera, are no longer unconvincingly unique to homo sapiens.

Another is the 'argument from marginal cases'. Animals are being denied rights and legal standing on the pretext that they are not intelligent enough. But then many humans, who are cognitively impaired and even infants, are far less intelli-

gent than many animals. Do we withhold justice and equality of rights from them? No. Thinkers, who favour this school of thought, say that justice and equality have nothing to do with the ability to reason but by the ability to suffer. Peter Singer, an Australian moral philosopher, regards speciesism as akin to racism and sexism. Weaker and different human groups are also declared as inferior beings by the dominant group. Animal activists are not unlike feminists of today who are resisting the commodification and violence perpetrated by the dominant group, who prefers the status quo.

Animals especially stray dogs are suffering immensely. Humans, who have taken most of the earth's space, throw stones at them and call them menace. Some don't slow their car when a stray is on the road. Unethical and inessential practices for human well-being such as factory farming and cosmetics testing on animals are also harming animals. The incidents of violence against hapless and innocent strays are increasing because there are no consequences for violence against animals.

That the stray dog population and suffering is rising is also our government's fault. It should promulgate laws that protect animals. Moreover, the government have the wherewithal to vaccinate and sterilize stray dogs and cats. In addition, it can also make such changes in the curriculum which teach compassion and raise awareness about the rightness or wrongness of a particular action. Currently, the curriculum is such that religious bigots, apathetic and misogynists are being produced. Humans are also the cause of degradation in the earth's environment. Men call themselves superior to animals yet it is man who defiles the earth wherever he appears and does immoral acts while animals are without sin and are not damaging our planet.

Some people have become desensitized and accustomed to the cruelty and abnormal things that are happening around them. This has normalised what should be abnormal and sustained the status quo. Some say that they do nothing to challenge the status quo because it seems impossible to change. People will keep abusing animals, eating more meat, using more plastic etcetera. But then there were plenty of horrible situations, from the global slave trade to the violation of women's right to vote, that once seemed impossible to change too and had been normalised but they did change. Current horrible situations will change too if most of us try to change them. Our actions, however small they may be, will make a difference. Those humans, who want to do nothing to diminish animals' suffering, should at least not be unkind to them. It will not cost them anything.