

FROM THE URDU PRESS

No. 46

1-15 May 2012

10-24 Jamadiul Akhar 1433 Hijri

[Note: Using editorials as an indicator, this series presents views, understanding and attitude of the Urdu periodicals in India towards various developments concerning the Middle East. The selection of an item does not mean the endorsement or concurrence with their accuracy or views. **Editor, MEI@ND**]

*



The Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 1 May 2012, Tuesday

1. Cracks in Saudi-Egyptian Diplomatic Relations

The problems in Saudi-Egyptian diplomatic relations are a result of the irresponsible behaviour of Egyptian lawyer Ahmed Gizawi. His actions have caused displeasure in the Kingdom. There had hardly been any instance in recent past when a foreign national had shown disrespect to the Saudi Monarch. But Gizawi dared to make him a party in a lawsuit on exploitation of Egyptian nationals employed in Saudi Arabia. It naturally became an issue of pride for Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Gizawi entered Saudi Arabia without *Ahram* (specific pilgrimage clothing) on a Pilgrimage Visa, and the Saudi authorities found him guilty of smuggling banned prescription drugs into the Kingdom, to which he confessed. He was put under detention for trafficking a large amount of Xanax.

The issue of Egyptian migrant workers needs to be resolved at political or diplomatic level. It is a responsibility of the Egyptian government and if Egypt did not raise the issue at a diplomatic level with Saudi Arabia then the Saudis could not be termed responsible for it. The government cannot take action until the case of exploitation is reported to it. It seems Gizwai took the matter into his hands after the Egyptian government's failure to raise the

issue. Gizawi is a liberal activist and is popular in Egypt. When the news of his detention in Saudi Arabia reached Egypt his supporters organised a demonstration at the Saudi embassy in Cairo.

The chronology of the event shows lack of responsibility on the part of the Egyptian government. Saudi Arabia provides the largest financial aid to Egypt, though this does not mean that Egyptian government and people should take orders from Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, the Egyptian authorities have failed in preventing actions that could create problems in their mutual relations. Resultantly, Saudi Arabia has had to recall its ambassador, Ahmed Qattan, and its Consular from Egypt and has closed its Embassy and Consulate in Egypt on security grounds. The Chief of the Egyptian Military Council, Field Marshall Tantawi personally contacted the Saudi King and expressed his desire to resolve the issue and normalise diplomatic relations, in response to which, the Saudi King promised to take a decision on the matter soon. The Arab League, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party of Egypt have appealed to the Kingdom to re-open the Saudi Embassy and the Consulate. The Embassy will be re-opened sooner or later but there is no chance of Gizawi's release until a trial in a Saudi court. The court may not take a sympathetic view given that the individual in question questioned the King. It is thus, not just a question of the rights of migrant workers but a question of the Saudi monarch's pride. The Egyptian government cannot overlook the aid and assistance provided by Saudi Arabia in its economic development.

Source: http://etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive_files/May/01/editorial.html



Hindustan Express (Daily Hindustan Express), New Delhi

Editorial, 1 May 2012, Tuesday

2. Failure of the UN Monitors in Syria

The chief of the UN Mission in Syria has warned that even a thousand unarmed monitors would not be able to prevent violence. The team of monitors appealed to all sides to bring an end to the violence and work together to establish peace, after reaching Damascus. It is expected that more monitors will be sent to Syria soon. The Security Council has cleared the positioning of 300 monitors in Syria to overlook the ceasefire. The violence has not completely stopped three weeks into the ceasefire. The ceasefire was declared on 12 April, however, according to reports, more than 500 people have been killed since the arrival of UN monitors. The government and opposition both blame each other for the killings. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, has also said that the Syrian government is violating the ceasefire. He has demanded that Syria immediately start working on the Annan plan for peace. The way violence and killings have continued raises question on the chances of success of the UN plan. The ceasefire which was agreed upon, with Kofi

Annan's mediation, seems to have failed to end the violence. Both sides are not ready to budge. The unarmed monitors have been positioned in a manner aimed to ensure peace but it has not worked thus far. On one hand the Syrian government did not welcome the monitors warmly, on the other hand the rebels also termed it to be an exercise in futility.

Syria has laid blame on what it considers to be international media propaganda against the government. It would be difficult to say anything with certainty but it seems there are lots of factors contributing to the bad publicity attracted by the Syrian government including the sectarian factor. Syria has maintained that it is being isolated for its unflinching support of the Palestinian cause. The West is calling for stricter actions against Assad while Russia and China have maintained that the Annan plan should be pursued. The UNSC resolution on Syria that was passed last month raised some hope for peace but now it seems it will completely fail. The UNSC had accepted the points raised by Russia and the EU to send civilian and military monitors to Syria for three months. Russia had advocated sending of monitors immediately while Western powers had demanded that monitors should be sent only after military bases were removed from the civilian areas. They had also asked for the imposition of sanctions on Syria in case of any violation of the UNSC resolution.

The international community wants to send humanitarian aid to Syria and a conference was organised in Geneva last week. It was decided that immediate steps would be taken to provide humanitarian aid to the people in Syria. Syria has also been accused of violating the terms of peace by not releasing political detainees. In short, the situation in Syria is uncertain; the continuation of killings despite the presence of the UN monitors reflects on the ineffectiveness of the UN. It has failed in ending the violence and killings in Syria. This also confirms that it would be very difficult to establish peace in Syria under the current circumstances.

Source: http://dailyhindustanexpress.com/gujashtah_shumare/may2012/01_05_2012/epaper/



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 1 May 2012, Tuesday

3. Peace: Vital for Egypt

It would take time to realize the extent of success achieved by the forces behind the change in Egypt. Yet currently Egypt is suffering from mass unrest. The Election Commission has declared the Salafi leader Abu Ismael ineligible to run for the Presidential election which enraged his supporters. The Mubarak era was tough on the people of Egypt. The situation in Egypt is not clear and none of the Presidential candidates seems to have a decisive support base. The first round of the Presidential election which has to be held on 23-24 May would decide the two candidates for the final run-off to be held in June. The extremist Salafi organization has now declared its support for the Abul Fattah, a former Muslim Brotherhood member. Salafis have a strong support all over Egypt. The diplomatic row with Saudi Arabia, over the arrest of Ahmed Gizawi, a human rights advocate, by Saudi

authorities for smuggling proscribed drugs, has also caused severe strain on the ruling military council. Though the chief of the military council, Field Marshal Tantawi took the initiative to resolve the issue with the kingdom, the interim ruling council will have to be very careful in the coming days to prevent any further chaos in Egypt. Another issue at the hands of the ruling council is to ensure the resolution of dispute over the composition of the Constituent Assembly. The governing council will have to work overtime to ensure peace and instil confidence among the masses with respect to the coming Presidential election. The people should be provided with a peaceful and calm atmosphere to take the decision on the future President of their country. The election commission is equally responsible for maintaining peace. The governing council will do well to resolve the problem with Saudi Arabia at the earliest in order to ensure smooth diplomatic relations.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr1-25>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 4 May 2012, Friday

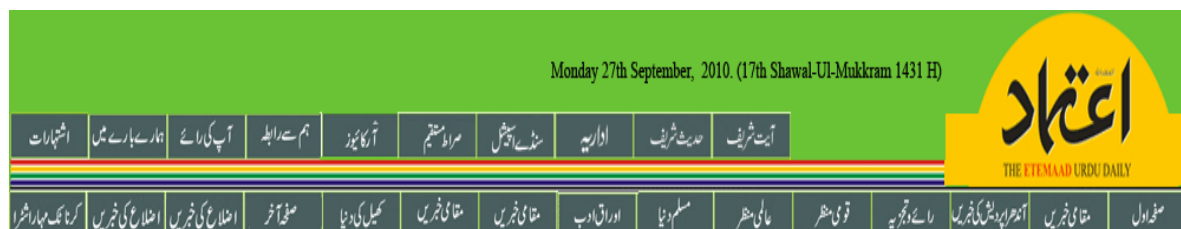
4. Division of Iraq

Masud Barzani, a prominent Kurdish leader, has indicated in a fresh statement that the Kurds can think about the creation of an independent Kurdish state, as this has remained the only option for Iraq to end its political turmoil. The statement also confirms the consensus among Kurds on the issue. The idea of an independent Kurdistan is not new and the Kurds have sacrificed a lots of their lives for this dream. Apart from Iraq, Turkey also has a sizeable Kurdish population. The reason the issue of independent Kurdistan has always ruffled the feathers of Turkish establishment and created problems in Iraq. The Kurdish political party (PKK) is still banned in Turkey. Turkey has never shied away from using force to suppress their voice. The current government has achieved some success in doing away with the sourness and it is the result of this effort that there is comparative peace in Turkey. But the Kurdish leader in Iraq has realized that it would be inevitable to continue with Baghdad and eventually they will have to ask for a division. They fear that in case of the trifurcation of Iraq, which seems inevitable in current circumstances, they would be forced to comply with some formula or condition and thus they want to take a prior call to decide on their fate. The leaders have now called for a referendum to know the people's wish. They are now focusing on trying to have a peaceful disintegration with any bloodshed.

Iraq has a majority Shia population. Sunnis also have a large population but are clearly divided into two camps; Kurds and Arabs. The Sunni Arabs are disorganized and hardly a political force. It has lost its incredible control over Iraq after Saddam Hussein. The Shias also do not have one single political platform. They are mainly divided into two camps led by Muqtada al-Sadr who has a large support base and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Ayad Allawi is also Shia but is a secular leader. Vice president Tariq al-Hashmi is Sunni but is

completely isolated. He is facing severe accusations and had to flee Baghdad due to major differences with the Prime Minister. Iraq is suffering from major political instability and all efforts to put things back on track have gone in vein. Iraq is practically divided into three pieces on sectarian and racial grounds. The idea to give a legal status to this situation confirms that Iraq is on the verge of division. The fear is that this can lead to the recurrence of civil war and external rule and it would be important to prevent any such situation.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=04-may-2012



The Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 8 May 2012, Tuesday

5. Presidential Election in Egypt

The authoritarian rule of Hosni Mubarak has ended but what have the people of Egypt gained? Democracy still seems to be a distant dream. It seems that the Egyptian revolution which was considered to be an indication of change in the Arab world is just a symbolic change. Hosni Mubarak has been replaced by military Generals. After nearly one and half year the military has not yet transferred power to civilian government.

As Egypt prepares for Presidential election, the question that has to be asked is that if Egypt is ready for democracy. The squabbling between military rulers and the Presidential candidates indicates towards the ensuing problems. The military does not want to become accountable and wishes to enjoy its commercial interests even after transfer of power. The military in Egypt has a huge interest in many economic sectors. Amr Mousa, who is supposedly a strong candidate has termed it a sensitive issue and refused to comment. Muhammad Mursi who is another strong candidate has said that he expect to resolve any issue through dialogue. Another strong candidate Abu al-Fatah is also in favour of appointing a General as Defence Minister through consultation with the military establishment.

The military in Egypt has always enjoyed a number of constitutional privileges. According to General Mamdouh Shahin, since 1923, there has always been a scope for military rule in case of any emergency situation. The statement by General Shahin is an alarm bell for democracy in Egypt.

There were 23 nominations for the first round of Presidential elections which would be held on 23-24 May, but the election commission rejected the nomination of 10 candidates and only 13 now remain in the fray. Amr Mousa is a strong candidate but has refused to comment on the issue of military. He is a liberal candidate, and is an advocate of free economy. Earlier he had served as the Secretary General of Arab League and also as the Foreign Minister of Egypt. He also favours resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace with Israel in case it withdraws from Arab lands it occupied in 1967 war.

The military civilian leaders have reiterated that they respect democratic accountability but it is not yet certain what type of democracy the people of Egypt want. The recently concluded parliamentary elections have been peaceful and transparent but Presidential elections would be more important as the President will possess executive powers. The coming into power of Islamists can have a major effect on the foreign policy of Egypt mainly towards the US and Israel. The moves by the military acquires importance as the nascent democracy in Egypt will be in crisis if the military refuses to go back to the barracks.

Source: http://etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive_files/May/08/editorial.html



Roznama Sahafat (Journalism Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 8 May 2012, Tuesday

6. Israeli Misgivings and Fears

Israel and Western powers have continuously expressed their worries regarding the Iranian Nuclear Programme. Israel seems to be the most worried; thus Israeli leaders have kept on commenting on the issue. The Israeli Defence Minister who had recently said that Iran is pursuing a nuclear programme wherein it can achieve a nuclear bomb within 60 days, confirmed that Iran has not yet acquired nuclear weapons. Some time back, American intelligence agencies had also said that Iran had not yet developed nuclear weaponry, nor has there been any evidence that it is pursuing nuclear weapons. The American behaviour has changed to an extent after this report. Earlier, the US had also been threatening Iran with military action on the contrary; Obama has said that negotiations should continue. On the other hand, Israeli leaders have said that the chances of negotiation are very remote, though some leaders have opposed any unilateral attack on Iran. The Israeli leaders are also well aware of their power and situation in the region. Perhaps that is why the Defence Minister has now agreed that Israel cannot prevent Iran from developing nuclear capabilities on its own. Israel has always tried to put pressure on the US to act against Iran. Recently, Israeli President Shimon Peres, has said in an interview in Canada that those who advocate unilateral action against Iran do not realise the consequences of attacking Iran. A former chief of intelligence has also expressed his opposition to military action against Iran. He has also said that Israel is not capable of dealing with the Iranian nuclear programme on its own. Obama is also against military action against Iran. He has also asked Israel to ponder before taking any unilateral action against Iran. But Israel is so scared of Iran that its leaders have started to have nightmares about the Iranian atomic bomb. They say that if Iran gets time, it would suddenly declare its nuclear capabilities. The Obama administration has been trying to counsel Israel out of fear but to no avail. In one of the interviews, he has also remarked that if Iran is attacked before time, it will gain the sympathy of the international community and will be identified as the victim. The American President has also tried to argue with Israel that the US is not playing with its security. But the US has been, in fact, playing with world peace. The US which he inherited from Bush was in complete economic mess. After wars in Iraq and Afghanistan the US is not in a position to enter into a long war any time soon. It has also affected the American image all over the world which has not been able to achieve the

desired success in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This has prevented Obama from taking any unilateral action on Iran.

Source: http://sahafat.info/delhi/May2012/08_05_2012/p-5-1.htm

Compiled and Translated by Md. Muddassir Quamar

Md. Muddassir Quamar is a Doctoral Candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Email: muddassir.2005@gmail.com

As part of its editorial policy, the MEI@ND standardizes spelling and date formats to make the text uniformly accessible and stylistically consistent. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND. Editor, **MEI@ND: P R Kumaraswamy**