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[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 Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 16 June 2013, Sunday

1. Challenges facing Hassan Rouhani

The result of the Iranian presidential election has been announced with the moderate candidate Hassan Rouhani being declared elected. He has secured a wide margin over all rival candidates and the share of votes of all the other candidates put together is less than Rouhani's alone. It is indeed clear that he has got support from the Iranian people across divides and it should be helpful in his endeavour to stabilize the situation in Iran. It is after two consecutive terms for the conservatives that the moderates have come to power in Iran. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was president for two consecutive terms and according to the Iranian constitution he could not have run for a third consecutive term, thus making it easier for the moderate group. In fact Hassan Rouhani was a consensus candidate for the moderates and even the former president Mohammad Khatami had pulled out of the race in his support. Hassan Rouhani will soon take over the mantle but will face major challenges to improve the condition of Iran. The most important issue would be to deal with the international pressure on the issue of the nuclear programme and any change in the Iranian stand would have a long-term effect. Hassan Rouhani had served as the chief negotiator for Iran during Khatami's term and had abandoned uranium enrichment, which was revived during Ahmadinejad's term. Another important issue would be to deal with the deteriorating Iranian economy due to the international sanctions. That apart, there are internal challenges which need immediate attention.

Rouhani's excellent show is one thing but his real test would be to deal with the problems. On the nuclear issue, the US and its allies want Iran to stop uranium enrichment that had been continuously rejected during Ahmadinejad's time as he had widespread cross-sectional support on the issue. Earlier, when he was the negotiator, the enrichment had been stopped but now as he would become the President, he will have to think about the interests of the people and the nation. Moreover, he will also have to think about the status of economic sanctions.

In addition to the nuclear issue and economic problems, dealing with the regional turmoil will be another important challenge for the President-elect. Iranian support to the beleaguered Syrian regime is one important issue. This Iranian stand on Syria may need to be revisited particularly because of the Western stand on the issue. Moreover, the rising Israeli one-upmanship in the region will also need to be tackled. It will again be important to have better relations with neighbours and other regional players. Though most of the countries in the region are against Israel, it would be a challenge to bring them together on a single platform. These are formidable challenges that confront Hassan Rouhani's term in office.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr17-47>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 17 June 2013, Monday

2. Protests in Turkey

Prim Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has done well to tackle the protests that have erupted over issues such as turning Turkey into a Sharia-complying state. It was not a huge protest and had the support of a small section of society. The people behind this protest were enemies of Islam and the country. The contention of the protestors was that the government is trying to skittle with the secular Turkish constitution. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been in power since 2002 and is rooted in Islam. It enjoys widespread support among the masses. But Turkey has strong secular elite which is opposed to the AKP government policies. Modern Turkey has tried to align with Europe, but despite economic development and social progress, it has not been allowed to become a member of the European Union because of its Islamic heritage. The protestors who had gathered at the Taksim Square may have thought that they could replicate something similar to the Arab Spring in Turkey, but the prime minister did not allow it to happen. This could be a handiwork of anti-Islamic forces who do not want Muslim countries to be ruled by a stable, progressive and representative government. Turkey has a distinct past and has different political conditions. The one-after-another instability in Muslim countries seems to be part of an organized conspiracy. Turkey is not a dictatorship and its political situation is widely different from other Muslim countries. The attempt to create chaos and instability inside Turkey has been thwarted by the government. One of the important aspects, however, is the fact that the protests were against the style of governance of the current dispensation. In this light the prime minister should review his allegedly authoritarian style of working. It is important to continue with strengthening the democracy in Turkey. It is indeed a responsibility of the Erdogan government to continue working towards an Islamic-democratic and inclusive Turkey. Any wrong step at this stage can prove to be counter-productive and harmful for the long-term interests of the people and the nation.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr18-47>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 18 June 2013, Tuesday

3. Iranian Presidential Elections

The election results in Iran are not surprising. It was indeed clear that moderate candidate Hassan Rouhani's popularity among voters is soaring. The results were welcomed by the people and the Iranian media but there are more interesting aspects to the election. In the last election, the Western media had alleged large-scale rigging saying that a large number of moderate voters had been prevented from voting while there had been instances of forceful voting in favour of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad though no concrete proof towards such allegations could be produced. This time however, there has been no scope for such allegations although the American and Israeli media had alleged that a large number of moderate candidates were disqualified by the Guardian Council to strengthen the hands of conservatives. The enthusiastic voting and results have proved such allegations as baseless. If popular candidates had been disqualified then it would not have attracted such enthusiastic participation from the electorate. Hassan Rouhani's election should be welcomed because he is an eminent scholar and an experienced politician. He is much more diplomatic when compared to Ahmadinejad. It is indeed a fact that Ahmadinejad was very popular among the people and has a clean image. But his speeches and way of communication was harsh and at times, in fact frequently, touched hyperbole. Hassan Rouhani had gained popularity when he had started speaking against the policies of the Shah. He had to flee the country to escape persecution and joined Khomeini and Rafsanjani in France. Rouhani and Ahmadinejad never had a public display of their differences though it was well known that they had political differences. Rouhani is supposed to be closer to Rafsanjani. But as far as the Iranian nuclear programme and Iranian policies towards Israel and the West are concerned, the Iranian leadership does not have much difference. But it is understood that Rouhani is in favour of cordial negotiations on the nuclear issue. It is unlikely that Israel will change its policy because of Rouhani's election; yet the way the international media has reacted towards the result, it could lead to decreased tensions and bitterness. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned the West that Rouhani's election would not change anything and the attitude towards Iran should not be softened. Israel wants to halt the Iranian nuclear programme by hook or crook. It has waged a war against Iran on various fronts by assassinating nuclear scientists, waging cyber warfare and so on. It is afraid that Iran under a moderate leadership could gain wider acceptance amongst the international community, making it difficult for Israel to continue its nasty propaganda against Iran.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=51707&boxid=41511713>



Inquilab (The Revolution), Mumbai

Editorial, 26 June 2013, Wednesday

4. Iraq still Struggling!

Ten years have passed since the US-led invasion of Iraq. Though it is understood that the war is over after most external forces have withdrawn, but the war continues. Iraq is struggling with day-to-day violence. In a recent incident, a minibus was attacked in the holy city of Karbala leading to the death of 16 people. The government has completely failed in stopping such attacks. According to a report by Brown University, the US-imposed war, cost nearly 90,000 lives and an estimated US\$200 trillion. Local estimates indicate that more than 200,000 people have been killed during the decade-long period of the war.

Modern weapons are capable of killing hundreds of thousands of people in one strike and Iraq has witnessed an abundant use of such sophisticated weaponry. George Bush imposed a war on Iraq on a false premise of weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein was captured and executed. Is it acceptable to remove one dictatorship by use of force on such a massive scale? The UN, which claims to be the representative of nations and vanguard of human rights, failed in preventing the US from this madness.

The mindless war has pushed the American economy into doldrums. It is the people who are now paying the price of crimes committed by their blood-thirsty [former] president. The current government in Iraq has also not been able to perform the basic task of providing security to the people. Nouri al-Maliki's government should work towards providing a peaceful environment for the people. The reconstruction of Iraq will remain a distant dream until violence is not brought under control.

Source: <http://epaper.inquilab.com/epaperhome.aspx?issue=26062013&edd=Mumbai>

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