

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Wither Pakistan Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Pakistan owes its existence to two factors- first deep rooted hatred for India and second to Islam. "We are invincible and pure because we are Muslims," they say, "India is our enemy because it is not an Islamic country."

These sentiments are frequently expressed by common people and commentators on Pakistani TV. I often watch these interviews on YouTube for a good laugh.

India was divided in 1947 because the Muslims wanted a separate country. India decided to exist as a secular democratic republic while Pakistan chose to be an Islamic nation. Soon after the separation they massacred the Hindus in Pakistan and destroyed many of the Hindu temples. Today the Muslim population in India is close to 200 million vs 94.5 million in 1947 while the Hindu population in Pakistan has decreased from 20.4% in 1947 to a mere 1.6% now.

The Pakistanis have been living on borrowed money. They beg and expect the Muslim nations to favor them. Ironically,



most of the Muslim nations are friends of India and are investing billions of dollars in India's growing economy while Pakistan is on the cusp of insolvency.

Mired in political, military, and feudal corruption, Pakistan has now existed as a

state that only survives due to the largesse of the Saudis, China, UAE, and the U.S. But finally, its patrons have also run out of patience due to a lack of transparency on the impact of their actual donations. Oil-rich Saudi Arabia has been a longtime ally of Pakistan, coming to its aid financially numerous times. But now even the Saudis are demanding to see serious improvements concerning governance and corruption before it loosens its purse strings.

Last week, Pakistan received another bad news from the International Monetary Fund which rejected Pakistan's plea for aid until it revised its Circular Debt Management Plan (CDMP). This, as its foreign reserves fell to \$3.2 billion - to around three weeks of imports - its rupee kept falling in January,

power outrages left millions in the dark, a food crisis intensified and debt obligation remained dangling over its head. (Source: Indian Express)

Pakistan is also deeply in debt to China. More than 30% of Pakistan's total foreign debt is owed to China, according to the IMF. That's three times what



Pakistan owes the IMF and more than its loans from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank combined (Source: CNBC).

Other than the economic crisis, Pakistan has always been ruled by corrupt military leaders directly or indirectly. Its democratically elected governments have always been short-lived due to military coups. The Pakistanis had direct military rules between 1958 to 1971, 1977 to 1988, and from 1999 to 2008). Still, according to them, Pakistan is the best country in the world. Allah has also given them the atomic bomb to deter the enemies of Islam.

Pakistan also continues to face multiple sources of internal and external conflict. Extremism and intolerance of diversity and dissent have grown, fueled by a narrow vision of Pakistan's national identity, and are threatening the country's prospects for social cohesion and stability. Pakistan's

Baluchistan province which is closer to Afghanistan in ethnicity wants independence from Pakistan. Just the other day they bombed a Pakistani mosque where more than 100 people died. The inability of

state institutions to reliably provide peaceful ways to resolve grievances has encouraged groups to seek violence

as an alternative.

Pakistan itself sponsors terrorism. It has provided shelters to gangsters who recruit and train terrorists to attack the interests of the United States and India. Osama bin Laden was hiding in Pakistan with the full knowledge of the military. It won't be an exaggeration to say that the biggest export of Pakistan is terrorism.

Today, Pakistan is a weak state; tomorrow, it could become a failed one. That would be a regional and global nightmare, given the presence of nuclear weapons and terrorists. Unfortunately, the Islamists are still blinded by their religious fervor. If they really want to belong to the world community and progress, they must come out of the veil of such notions.