

## Map That Deceive

**By Ram Madhav**

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*The recent renaming exercise is a continuation of China's claims over the region. It was through a similar deception in 1962 that it annexed territory.*

“All warfare is based on deception”, Sun Tzu, the famed Chinese military strategist averred in his treatise. Deception is integral to the Chinese leadership's machinations.

India has been a victim of this deception from the time of its Independence, which, by a sheer quirk of fate, coincided with the victory of Mao's Red Army in China. As Indians were revelling in their newly won independence, Mao was sending messages to Indian Communists, promising support in their violent “liberation struggle” to overthrow the government of Jawaharlal Nehru, whom they derided as the “running dog” of imperialists and a “loyal slave” of the enemies of the revolution.

In the early 1950s, China started indulging in cartographic deception, staking claims to large parts of Indian territory. The Indian leadership looked at these claims as a negotiable misunderstanding and complacently trusted Zhou Enlai's lies. Even while announcing the ill-conceived and ill-fated “forward policy” in October 1962 to assert Indian authority over territories under cartographic challenge, Prime Minister Nehru smugly believed that the Chinese would never attack India. In 1959, he condemned the British Tibetan expert George Patterson for spreading “bazaar rumours about the Chinese” and threatened to expel him.

Despite his hollow claims recently in Moscow about standing “guard over the world order based on international law”, President Xi Jinping continues to pursue that old Maoist strategy of violating sovereign national boundaries of neighbours using cartography as a weapon.

The recent rechristening of villages, unpopulated areas, rivers and hills in Arunachal Pradesh by the State Council, the Chinese cabinet, is another example of that cartographic deception. Never in known history did Arunachal Pradesh have any remote contact with China. There was never any Chinese presence there, nor was there any familiarity between the two peoples. Tibetans from Lhasa used to travel to Kolkata via Sikkim and sail onwards to mainland China. At most, the Monpas of Tawang spoke Tibetan, but a few miles down the road, the Sherdukpens of Bomdila spoke a different dialect and hundreds of other tribes further to the east spoke languages that were closer to Assamese.

The only time in recent history the Chinese army came close to Arunachal Pradesh's borders was during the final years of the Qing dynasty in 1910-12, when it entered Kham across what became the MacMahon Line in the Walong area, as part of a campaign to crush the revolt by the Khampas in eastern Ladakh.

The Chinese were preoccupied with the raging civil war in the subsequent decades, while the British administration gradually established its influence over the entire northeast frontier tracts — NEFT. After independence, the administration changed into Indian hands and NEFT was renamed as the Northeast Frontier Agency or NEFA in 1954, and Arunachal Pradesh in 1987.

Some pro-China historians claimed that parts of Western Arunachal Pradesh like Tawang were under the rule of Lhasa before 1950. But historical records negate such claims. Although the sixth Dalai Lama, a Monpa, was born in Tawang in 1683 and moved to Lhasa to become the spiritual and temporal head of Tibet in 1697, Tawang remained largely independent of any outside authority. Through the Shimla Agreement between the British and Tibetan governments in 1914, the McMahon Line became the international boundary between India and Tibet. Tawang fell south of the McMahon Line, clearly putting it out of Tibetan administrative control.

The McMahon Line, branded as a “colonial” imposition by the Chinese, followed the internationally accepted formula of mountain peaks and watersheds as the boundary. Further to the Shimla Agreement, the British had demarcated an inner line that separated the Assam plains from the hills and considered the mountain peaks and watershed areas to its north as the outer line.

People of western NEFA, like their counterparts in the rest of the region, were never subjects of any outside power. They negotiated with the British when the latter made an outreach across the inner line in the early 1900s and reported to their Commissionerates at Sadiya and Balipara in Assam. After Independence, the cautious Indian administration, led by officers like Nari Rustomji, the ICS official of the Assam cadre, focused on giving primacy to the development of the region rather than exerting authority in haste. But to their surprise, people in NEFA were more keen on some kind of a visible Indian authority over the region and insisted on paying annual house tax so that they could become Indian citizens officially.

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## OUTLAWED

**By Sanjay Sahay, IPS**

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Outlawed means a person who is a fugitive from the law. These are not normal offenders but are the ones who have reached a level of notoriety and that is where this sobriquet is provided to them. Outlawed are ones with whom a normal law-abiding person would think twice to interact, given a choice he will never interact. We are all aware of the number of lawmakers who carry criminal cases on their head. Alas, it is not a stigma for them or for the parties they represent. The mindset psychological issue comes into play, the person who has been on the wrong side of the law, will have scant respect for law.

What will be his interest in understanding a law being made, leave aside how much effort he would need to comprehend it. On the other side, lawyers and judges practice the same law in different ways. The gap of background, attitude, education, training, and practice is clearly visible. Over the years, it's becoming clear that the law itself is being outlawed. Otherwise, how do you view a law breaker making a law. Is law only the word written in law books? Does no transaction happening session after session in the Parliament have the mandate of the law? Does the passage of the budget without discussion has any legal sanctity from a democratic perspective?

Providing pension for being a part of legislature for every term he is elected does not make sense. Are such laws not antithetical to other similar expenditure and financial rules of the government?

Worse still is the fate of affidavits before the Election Commission of India and other similar offices. No one takes the responsibility of the data provided with no connecting records to boost and the legal purpose is also served. If academic qualifications come into question, what is the guarantee that the other facts are true with lots being law breakers amongst them. This privilege is not provided to anyone else. Why not check it, it is job of the state. Is law not outlawed in this case as well?

What about the remission policies? How difficult it is to get a conviction from the lowest courts till the Supreme Court of India and then in a cavalier manner remission is provided. How can an executive type of process be allowed to take over the judicial pronouncement? Let the courts decide if it were to happen. Good behaviour being pronounced on them for this purpose, is a travesty of justice. It is better not to talk of parole and all that. Government withdrawing criminal cases, does not make any legal sense, rather it gives a feeling of justice being dismembered. Sometimes the cases are against the very same persons who decide of its withdrawal. What about the NPAs being written off, how can that be a law? And tons of government orders issued in clear contravention of the word and for sure the spirit of law.

HAS LAW BEEN SYSTEMATICALLY OUTLAWED?

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## Appraising the IAS on Civil Services Day

**By Uday Kumar Varma, IAS**

Author is a former Secretary, Information and Broadcasting, GOI

‘After a time, civil servants tend to become no longer servant, and no longer civil’; thus spoke the irrepressible and witty Winston Churchill.

Our own Prime Minister seems to have better opinion of them. Just a week ago, addressing the Civil Services’ Day function, the PM invoked the phrase ‘steel frame’ for the IAS. This phrase was put to use after a long time. It was reassuring for the service, but a liberal tinge of doubt is unmissable in the mention.

The PM drew a distinction between ‘letting things happen’ and ‘getting things done’. He acknowledged the contribution and capabilities of the service but cautioned against the constraints of time and the demands of urgency in dealing with pressing issues.

He exhorted the service to inculcate a ‘people centric’ and ‘development centric’ mindset and to assess their success not in terms of what they are able to do for themselves but instead what they have been able to do for the nation. His call for integrity in decisions and conduct was loud and clear.

### **The Rusted, Corroded Steel Frame**

National Civil Services Day is celebrated in India every year on April 21. The day commemorates the birth of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first Home Minister of independent India. Sardar Patel placed great faith in the civil services, despite open hostility and suspicion about their attitude and arrogance during the Imperial Raj.

On this day, civil servants across the country are recognised for their hard work and dedication towards serving the people. The contribution of civil servants towards the development of the country is assessed and applauded.

Despite this tradition, most of the cognoscenti sincerely believe the ‘steel frame’ to have already fatally corroded. Serious doubts have been raised from time to time about the relevance and efficiency of the services, especially the IAS.

The services have also shown a tendency to rest on their past laurels and dismiss any challenges to their legitimacy as mere sound and fury signifying nothing.

### **The Black Sheep**

In the mind of the common man, Arvind Joshis and Pooja Singhals have come to symbolise and characterise the IAS today. This is both terrible and tragic.

It is terrible because it is a calamitous manifestation of the blatant abuse of authority, and tragic because it is a denial of the outstanding work of scores of dedicated IAS officers whose enthusiasm and energy blossom into enviable sagas of sensitivity and sense of duty.

It is a crying shame that a handful of officers in their ugly and reprehensible pursuit of power and money have denigrated the lofty ideals that many of their brethren have held in the face of unspeakable odds; but such is the nature of the service. The ugliness sublimates while the beauty evaporates. Like stains on a white sheet, the services have oft had to bear heavy the burden of their black sheep.

### **The Decline is Real**

And despite the presence of dedication, diligence and true determination towards public service, the decline in the quality of the IAS cannot be denied. The decline principally includes eroding integrity amongst a substantial section of the service, and a casual indifference and acceptance of this practice amongst the others. Several factors have been attributed to this change, viz. political interference, limited accountability, lack of proper incentive structures, inappropriate orientation and unfound arrogance being the principal ones.

These factors and possible solutions to them have been discussed and deliberated several times and on diverse platforms. Political interference and maintenance of political neutrality remains the foremost under deliberation. Realistically, no one expects the services, especially the IAS, to be politically neutral any longer. It is seen as the norm that politicians would pressurise officers to serve their ends: but what is unexpected is the increasing tendency of the IAS to succumb to such pressures, often without even a token resistance. In many instances, this surrender is completely willing.

It is this capitulation that provides grist to the mill. Indeed, it is this nexus that has been struck with the politicians that had led to the rot in the system and is becoming fouler by the day. Denying this nexus only confirms the allegation that many of the members of this service are completely compromised.

Those who defend this service on this count are not so different from the ostrich that buries its head in the sand and denies the existence of a storm. The more such defenders try to couch the problem in intelligently worded semantics, the more complex they are likely to make the way forward for course correction.

### **A Crisis of Morals and Ethics**

Another shocking development of recent years is recurring instances of questionable integrity among young officers and recent joiners to the services. Some have been caught indulging in rank corruption in their very first posting. Others seem to view extraneous income as a natural perk to the job. If this rot is not stemmed right away, the demise of this once prided public service is certain.

The Karma Yogi program, a leadership development initiative launched by the Government of India in 2020 places the issue of ethics and values at the top of its agenda, aiming to inculcate a strong sense of these in the service. It encourages young officers to embrace integrity, honesty and accountability in their work and personal life. While the intent is laudable, the fact that now efforts have to be made towards instilling something that should already have been present is nothing short of a disgrace, and an implicit acknowledgement of the services' falling standards.

## **Self-Perpetuating, Self-Serving**

The recipient of the majority of criticism and the target of most of the improvement programs in the services is the IAS: what an irony it is that a service which was expected to be a beacon of transparency and a symbol of integrity for the rest of the bureaucracy is the one identified to be singularly lacking in this respect!

Today the representation of the IAS in central staffing is at an all-time low and it is likely to be even less represented in times to come. The isolation of IAS in this regard can be primarily traced to their patronising and condescending attitude towards their sister All-India Services. It has been compounded by their blatantly self-serving and self-perpetuating machinations, often violating all norms of equity and fair play.

The IAS is a service where competence and intelligence may not be at a premium, but a commitment to the ideals of bureaucracy and a faultless level of conduct was to be the norm that stood them above others. Mired by arrogance, attenuating integrity and an unhealthy eagerness to join hands with pernicious political interests have changed the way they are perceived today, both by the public and their fellow civil servants.

Given their generalist nature, it was possible and indeed eminently advisable for the IAS to forge a rapport with other services, retaining their marginally superior position without rubbing it in. It was expected that they would be at the forefront of establishing a leadership role and forging a larger and cohesive higher administrative structure. Their high-handedness and myopia have cost them dearly.

### **Not Too Late**

In the annals of bureaucratic history, the IAS remains an absorbing and illustrious innovation. It has generally served, and served well for several years, the purpose for which it was created. It will indeed be a sad day when this service folds up, and if things continue unabated, fold up it will; the signs of its demise are unmissable.

There are still a large number of extremely competent officers whose integrity and commitment is beyond question. The question is when will they come together and look beyond their individual growth to raise their service again to the high standards it once held.

While the services continue to attract some of the most inspired and ambitious of our youth, a few unrepentant and unrelenting black sheep still cause irrevocable damage. And if it meets its demise in these circumstances, whose possibility is eminent, while it may be remembered with some nostalgia, its death will remain largely unlamented.

The PM's recent address underlines the hope and faith that the political leadership still reposes in the IAS, indeed in the service class as a whole; it is testament to the fact that perhaps it is still not too late. It will be supremely unfortunate then if this so-called elite service does not respond to this expectation.

**A PM who is indulgent and patient could also be ruthlessly surgical.**

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## **Pakistan's Existential Economic Crisis**

**By Shahbaz Rana**

The Author is an economic correspondent with Pakistan's daily English newspaper The Express Tribune and the host of a primetime TV show, The Review, at Express News.

*There is a real danger that Pakistan could default on its debt, which could lead to intensifying political turmoil amid already surging terrorism.*

Pakistan's stability increasingly depends on the outcome of an ever-worsening economic crisis. Amid skyrocketing inflation, political conflict between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government and former Prime Minister Imran Khan, and surging terrorism, the country is facing the risk of a default due to its massive external debt obligations. This burden has been exacerbated by the derailment of the \$6.5 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) program Pakistan entered in 2019, as the international lender is unsatisfied with Pakistan's commitment to reform and ability to arrange for funds to meet external financing requirements. Troublingly, Pakistan's official foreign exchange reserves are hovering around \$4 billion, which is insufficient to finance even a one-month of the country's import bill.

Can Pakistan recover from the economic abyss? To determine, it is important to consider: (1) the composition of Pakistan's overall external debt; (2) repayment pressure on the debt in both the short- and medium-term; (3) potential inflows that can offset the debt outflows; and (4) Pakistan's external debt management strategy.

### **1. Pakistan's Debt Composition — and the Terms on the Debt**

As of December 2022, Pakistan holds external debt and liabilities of \$126.3 billion. Nearly 77% of this debt, amounting to \$97.5 billion is directly owed by the government of Pakistan to various creditors; an additional \$7.9 billion is owed by government-controlled public sector enterprises to multilateral creditors.

Who are these creditors? Pakistan's creditors fall in four broad categories: multilateral debt, Paris Club debt, private and commercial loans, and Chinese debt.

#### **Multilateral Debt**

A major share of Pakistan's debt is owed to multilateral institutions, amounting to roughly \$45 billion. Islamabad's main multilateral creditors include the World Bank (\$18 billion), the Asian Development Bank (\$15 billion) and the IMF (\$7.6 billion). Pakistan owes smaller amounts to the Islamic Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as well.

While a significant amount of Pakistan's total debt, multilateral debt doesn't present major short-term risks for Pakistan. The terms of most loans are largely concessional with a repayment timeline spanning 18 to 30 years; most repayments are spread in many small transactions. In 2022-23, Pakistan repaid a total \$4.5 billion debt to multilateral creditors, which is a fifth of the total debt repayment for the year.

#### **Paris Club Debt**

Pakistan owes \$8.5 billion to the Paris Club, a group of 22 major-creditor countries. This debt is scheduled to be repaid over 40 years with less than 1% interest rate, and is mostly owed to Japan, Germany, France and the United States.

#### **Private Debt and Commercial Loans**

Pakistan holds a large amount of private debt; much of this is in the form of private bonds, such as Eurobonds and global Sukuk bonds, amounting to \$7.8 billion. Some of this debt is recent: In the last fiscal year, Pakistan raised \$2 billion by floating Eurobonds of 5, 10, and 30 years at an interest rate ranging from 6 percent for five years and 8.87 percent for 30 years.

Pakistan holds foreign commercial loans to the tune of nearly \$7 billion, which is likely to increase to nearly \$9 billion by the end of the current fiscal year. Much of Pakistan's commercial loan stock is owed to Chinese financial institutions, as Pakistan has repaid major non-Chinese commercial loans of institutions.

Most commercial loans come with steep terms; they have to be repaid to the lenders between one to three years. The rates on the loans are high as well. Some are benchmarked against the London Interbank Offered Rate (also known as LIBOR). Others, like Chinese commercial loans, are pegged against the Shanghai Interbank Offered Rate (SHIBOR).



For example, Pakistan recently obtained a \$2.2 billion commercial loan from the China Development Bank at six-month SHIBOR rate plus 1.5 percent; this loan is to be repaid over a three-year period.

### **Chinese Bilateral Debt**

Pakistan holds around \$27 billion of Chinese debt. This includes around \$10 billion of bilateral debt and \$6.2 billion in debt provided by the Chinese government to Pakistani public sector enterprises, and Chinese commercial loans of around \$7 billion. In addition, China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) has placed \$4 billion worth of foreign deposits with Pakistan's central bank. The bilateral debt is on concessional terms with a maturity period of 20 years. In addition to the \$27 billion in debt, Pakistan also has a currency swap facility with the Chinese.

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## **The Peace That Could Have Been**

**By C. Raja Mohan**

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*C Raja Mohan writes: If the Kashmir talks that almost came to fruition were Satinder Lambah's last hurrah in a diplomatic life devoted to negotiating peace with Islamabad, the political failure to conclude them marked the end of an era in India-Pakistan relations.*

As Pakistan's multi-faceted crisis deepens by the day, India seems utterly detached. There has been little visible engagement between the governments of India and Pakistan for some years now. The only exception was the ceasefire agreement of February 2021. Delhi insists on a terror-free environment to resume the dialogue. It is not that Pakistan is eager to resume talks.

Imran Khan, who was ousted from power a year ago and is riding high with strong popular support and the judiciary's tilt towards him, ruled out talks with India the other day. He wants Delhi to reverse the constitutional changes in Kashmir that were introduced in August 2019 before Pakistan comes to the table.

What about the ruling coalition in Islamabad? The major elements of the current government including Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League and Asif Ali Zardari's Pakistan People's Party have at various times in the last three decades made a sincere effort at negotiating peace with India. But they were overruled by the then-Army leadership. Today, they are fighting for their political survival against Imran Khan; engaging India is not at the top of their minds. The new Army chief, General Asim Munir, has said little about India. He has far too many domestic problems on his plate.

Must we then just give up on Pakistan? The story of one Indian diplomat, the late Satinder Lambah who spent most of his long diplomatic career in Pakistan, says India should not. In his book published posthumously, *In Pursuit of Peace: India-Pakistan Relations Under Six Prime Ministers*, Lambah insists that it is unwise for India not to engage a large and significant neighbour like Pakistan. This certainly is not a view widely shared today within the Indian strategic community.

Few understood the deep despair within the Indian establishment on engaging Pakistan better than Lambah. He was very centre of the repeated Indian efforts over the recent decades to negotiate peace with Pakistan and had the bitter experience of seeing them come to nought.

He had served as India's deputy high commissioner and later as high commissioner in Pakistan. He oversaw the Pakistan desk as the joint secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. Lambah was the special envoy of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who negotiated an ambitious peace agreement with Pakistan's General Pervez Musharraf on Kashmir.

That extensive experience gave him more than enough insight into the difficulties of negotiating with Pakistan. Among the many challenges was Pakistan’s internal volatility in terms of engagement with India. There was no guarantee that the results from the negotiations with one leader would be honoured by his successor.

Lambah was also acutely conscious of the bureaucratic and public pressures on the Indian prime ministers not to sign sensible agreements, because they might be seen by the public as making undue concessions to Pakistan. There have been many instances when Indian leaders pulled back from agreements that they said yes to but changed their minds soon after.

The reluctance to turn even successful negotiations into formal compacts is rooted in the massive public emotion attached to the relationship in both countries. The multitude of grievances on both sides, accumulated in the run-up to the Partition and since, hangs heavily over the bilateral engagement.

On the other hand, there is extraordinary mutual goodwill at the level of individuals and large sections of civil society. Satinder Lambah, whose family migrated from Peshawar at the time of Partition, had great sensitivity to both the negative and positive dynamics of bilateral diplomacy. This sensitivity combined with the mastery over the negotiating record made Lambah the natural candidate to take charge of the most consequential negotiations with Pakistan since 1972. The mandate was to settle the Kashmir question with Pakistan.

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## **Nation is Indebted to: Yogendra Bangar**



***Aajibaichi Shala a school, started by Yogendra Bangar for grandmothers — is letting these elderly women live their dream.***

The school was founded in 2016 in Fangane village, 43 kms away from Murbad, Dist. Palghar in Maharashtra. These 'students' wear their bright pink saree-uniforms and come to school.

“The idea for Ajjibainchi Shaala came to me in February 2016, when we were celebrating Shivaji Jayanti,” says the founder Yogendra Bangar, when asked about how the idea for a grandmothers’ school came about. His voice is warm at the other end of the phone, his tone earnest.



He goes on to say: “The ladies in the village were reading out of a paath (a holy passage), and I heard the senior women say that they wished they, too, could read the text. That’s when I suggested the idea of a school for them, and the whole village rallied behind me.” It is clear he is excited at the memory of their eagerness years later. The simplicity of his idea and his earnestness is striking.

Ajjibainchi Shaala, the only school to be named after its students, was founded on March 8, 2016; on International Women’s Day in Fangane village in Maharashtra. Bangar, an activist and the zila parishad teacher of the Motiram Dalal Charitable Trust, was the brains behind the initiative. The school had a simple name, it was set up by a simple man, and the idea was also simple. However, the simplest of ideas are somehow always the most life changing. This was a school set up solely for elderly women of Fangane, who wished to be able to pick up pencils as their children and grandchildren did and sign their names.

The Ajjibainchi Shaala is one of a kind school. It makes a lifelong dream come true for the ajjis (grandmothers). “Now when I’m asked in heaven what I did with my life, I’ll say I learnt to sign my name,” says one of the ajjis (grandmothers) with a proud smile as she looks straight into the camera, unafraid. And, why not? After all, she is now a lettered woman. Only a few women living in rural India, and of her age, can boast of the same. She has overcome. She has triumphed over society, circumstance. She has the glance of a woman who has achieved her dream, the one who can say “Yes, I did it!”

Bangar, who garnered great encouragement from families across Fangane, first took up the task of setting up the school in two living rooms in a house in the village, which remains open for only two hours a day — from 2 pm to 4 pm. His efforts have brought alive the wish that the village ajjis had thought impossible.

Today, they wear bright pink saree-uniforms and head to school together to learn their rhymes, math, alphabet, and art — and like any other students, complain about homework and tests. They are living a life they never had access to. Pretty in pink, sprightly of step and wide toothy and toothless smiles are what their Sundays are about now.

The Ajjibainchi Shaala broke the mould and sent a shockwave of hope through not just Fangane, but all of India. It sparked inspiration in a number of other communities across the country and has given a generation who would never normally have had access to crucial knowledge of letters, numbers, hygiene, sanitation and basic rights. The ajjis today walk proudly; they answer the phone, speak up at village meetings, understand the papers that they sign and perhaps, most important of all, push the inkpads away, pick up a pen and sign their names. It’s a kind of respect and dignity that rises above age, gender and status, and makes them equals. Ajjibainchi Shala is a Maharashtrian grandmother’s lesson to all of India, and it’s one of India’s proudest stories.

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