



# PAKISTAN - SRI LANKA RELATIONS: A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP



**PAKISTAN – SRI LANKA RELATIONS:  
A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP**



**PAKISTAN – SRI LANKA RELATIONS:  
A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP**

**Editors**

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Imran, PhD  
Bhagya Senaratne

**Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA)  
National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan  
(2017)**

This publication is based upon a joint venture between National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan and General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka. Both universities provided full support and guidance to contributors to improve the quality of the research work.

**Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations: A Story of Friendship**

First Published in March 2017.

Copyright © Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis, National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan (2017).

All rights reserved. No part of this publication to be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without obtaining written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer:** The opinion, analyses and recommendations proffered in the book are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies of Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis, National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad or the Government of Pakistan and General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), Ratmalana or the Government of Sri Lanka.

**ISBN: 978-969-7671-02-1**

*Published by*

Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA),  
National Defence University, Sector E-9, Islamabad, Pakistan.  
+92-51-9260651  
www.ndu.edu.pk

*In collaboration with*

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU)  
Kandawala Road, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka.  
+94-11-2635268  
www.kdu.ac.lk

*Printed and bound in Pakistan by*

AR Printers, Islamabad.

**Price:** USD 20  
PKR 1000  
LKR 1500

Dedicated to  
those who made the supreme sacrifice  
for their motherland





# Contents

<i>Message by President NDU</i>	i
<i>Message by Vice Chancellor KDU</i>	ii
<i>Preface</i>	iii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iv
<i>Abbreviations</i>	vii
<i>Political Map of South Asia</i>	ix
<i>Pakistan – Sri Lanka at a Glance</i>	x

## PART I

### *Historical Perspectives*

1. **A Historical Overview of Sri Lanka–Pakistan Relations: A Sri Lankan Perspective** 1  
Professor Amal Jayawardane
2. **A Historical Outlook of Pakistan–Sri Lanka Relations** 17  
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Basit

## PART II

### *Geostrategic and Defence Dimensions*

3. **Pakistan–Sri Lanka Relations: A Politico-Strategic Outlook** 31  
Colonel Dr. Muhammad Saif-ur-Rehman, TI(M)
4. **Defence Cooperation: A Sri Lankan Perspective** 65  
Colonel Chandana Wickramasinghe RWP RSP
5. **The Geopolitics of Sri Lanka-Pakistan Relations: A Sri Lankan Perspective** 79  
Dr. Sithara Fernando

## PART III

### *Economic Dimensions*

6. **Economic Relations: A Sri Lankan Perspective** 99  
Bhagya Senaratne
7. **Economic Outlook of Pakistan–Sri Lanka Relations** 117  
Dr. Shaheen Akhtar

## **PART IV**

### ***Socio-Cultural Dimensions (People-to-People Contact)***

8. <b>Pakistan-Sri Lanka Socio-Cultural Relations: A Sri Lankan Perspective</b>	139
Asantha Senevirathna & Sanath De Silva	
9. <b>Socio-Cultural Perspective of Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations (People-to-People Contact)</b>	161
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Basit	
<b><i>Way Forward</i></b>	183
<b><i>Notes on Contributors</i></b>	189

# Message

*Lieutenant General Rizwan Akhtar, Hilal-I Shujaat,  
Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military)*  
President, National Defence University, Pakistan



The two immensely important strategic partners of South Asia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka enjoy profound relations hinging upon their socio-cultural affinity. The genesis of sincere relations dates back to centuries old Gandhara civilisation, which is still cherished by the people of both countries. The centuries old ethno-cultural harmony between the two nations finds its roots in the footprints of history that continues in the world of today with added zeal and commitment. Pakistan's whole-hearted support to Sri Lanka during critical years of insurgency added to the tranquillity of relations.

Of late, both countries have entered into a new phase of mutual cooperation by signing agreements in the fields of civil nuclear technology, trade, economy, energy and education, etc. As far as defence cooperation is concerned, Pakistan has had the immense potential to offer Sri Lanka a set of strategies to uphold its integrity in the comity of nations particularly in South Asia. This has been tangibly exhibited since mid-1980s. Civil and military leadership at both ends have expressed an avowal to enhance cooperation in multiple areas especially defence and security including training, relief and disaster management operations, etc.

I am personally indebted to Major General (Retired) Milinda Peiris, former Vice Chancellor General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka for conceiving the most valued idea of documenting the history of relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Gratitude is also extended to Rear Admiral Jagath Ranasinghe USP, psc, Vice Chancellor, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University for his consistent support. I appreciate the untiring efforts of the authors, who rose to the expectations related to the compilation of this book. I am certain that the contents of this book will serve as guidelines to all those, who are aspirant to take Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations to further splendour.

*Long Live Pakistan-Sri Lanka Friendship!*



# Message

*Rear Admiral J J RANASINGHE, USP, psc,  
MSc (DS) Mgt, MMaritime Pol (AUS), PG Dip in CPS,  
Dip in CR, AFNI (Lond), JP (Whole Island)*  
Vice Chancellor, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence  
University, Sri Lanka



It is a pleasure to witness this historic moment of the issuance of this publication as a collaborative event between General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), Sri Lanka and the National Defence University (NDU) of Pakistan, which is sure to further strengthen and cement the outstanding bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Both KDU and NDU could be proud of their roles in embarking on a project such as this. It is particularly pertinent for KDU to make a contribution of this sort, continuing the legacy of its benefactor General Sir John Kotelawala, the third Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

Through this publication KDU has been able to contribute towards filling a vacuum in research on the two countries and their relationship, providing a balanced overview of the interactions from historical ties to political and defence cooperation as well as the economic relations. It also dwelled on the significant personal contacts, which the people of the two countries have maintained with one another. Most importantly, it has elaborated on the strategic and geopolitical importance of one towards the other.

I believe it is important that KDU and NDU, as the two premier defence institutions of the two countries, should embark on further collaborations extending this effort to encourage further research on defence and strategic issues, and I am quite confident that this publication has laid a sound foundation for such efforts in the future. I, therefore, congratulate all those who took an outstanding effort to make this effort a reality.



# Preface

*Major General Ghulam Qamar, Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military)*  
Director General, Institute for Strategic Studies, Research  
and Analysis, National Defence University, Pakistan



Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA), National Defence University (NDU), Pakistan being a leading ‘National Think Tank’ takes pride in undertaking this joint publication as a sacred mission to bring both nations, i.e., Pakistan and Sri Lanka closer to each other by preserving the various pages from their modern history. The aim is to apprise the generations about the foundations of their relations. The focus, therefore, remains on significant aspects that bring two nations closer to each other. The book carries narration of various events, and it will certainly leave food for thought for the area-study experts, strategists, potential writers, researchers and general readers.

Appreciation is extended to Major General (Retired) Dr. Noel I. Khokhar, Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military), former Director General, ISSRA, NDU and Major General Ruwan Kulatunga, former Deputy Vice Chancellor, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), Sri Lanka for their keen interest in this project.

This book is definitely going to lead towards many other areas of academic research in due course. I must congratulate my team of officers along with the team from KDU for translating this concept of joint publication (book) into a reality.





# Acknowledgements

It is with the greatest joy that we - as editors of this joint publication - take this opportunity to convey our sincere acknowledgments to everyone, who has enabled us to ensure that this publication is of the highest academic quality. And, we would be failing in our duties if we do not appreciate those who have provided us with the courage required towards this end.

From the Pakistan side, we most sincerely tender our gratitude to Lieutenant General Anwar Ali Hyder, Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military), former President National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad and Major General (Retired) Noel I. Khokhar, Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military), former Director General Institute of Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA), NDU for providing every possible support and pleasant environment, which facilitated significantly in the accomplishment of this book. The editors also profoundly acknowledge the continued generous support and exceedingly professional guidance from Lieutenant General Rizwan Akhtar, Hilal-I-Shujaat, Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military), President NDU and Major General Ghulam Qamar, Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military), Director General ISSRA, which facilitated the research work to be completed with ease and respite.

Our earnest thanks are extended to Major General (Retired) Syed Shakeel Hussain, Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military), the High Commissioner of Pakistan to Sri Lanka for his encouragement and all out support to the completion of this joint project. He extended immense help and guidance to shape the outline of the project, and shared valued information and experience to make this book worthy of reading. The delineation of parameters of the book and indication of crucial areas by Colonel Muhammad Rajil Irshad Khan (Defence Advisor) are equally commendable.

Very special gratitude is paid to notable personalities including Vice Admiral (Retired) Muhammad Haroon, Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Military), Tamgha-e-Basalat, Air Vice Marshal (Retired) Shahzad Aslam Chaudhry, former High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Mr. Shaheen

## *Acknowledgements*

A. Gillani, former High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Professor Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Dean-Faculty of Contemporary Studies, NDU, Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, Minister for Commerce and Trade, Government of Pakistan and Syed Zulfiqar Gardezi, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan. These dignitaries convincingly conveyed a spirit of adventure in research and erudition, and extended their candid views, which enriched the research work. We sincerely admit that without their candid input and persistent help, this project would have been incomplete.

From the Sri Lankan side, the editors would like to extend their gratitude to Major General (Retired) Milinda Peiris, former Vice Chancellor, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), Sri Lanka for initiating this momentous endeavour with NDU Pakistan and Major General Ruwan Kulatunga, former Deputy Vice Chancellor, KDU for his unwavering support in conducting the research work for the publication. We would also like to offer our heartfelt appreciation to Rear Admiral Jagath Ranasinghe, Vice Chancellor KDU and Brigadier Indunil Ranasinghe, Deputy Vice Chancellor KDU for their continuous encouragement and guidance in ensuring this joint publication is completed.

We also extend our appreciation to Major General (Retired) Jayanath Lokuketagodage, the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan for his support in this endeavour. Sri Lanka's Defence Attaché, Brigadier Senarath Bandara's assistance in conducting research and his continued cooperation is noteworthy.

We take this opportunity to extend our highest appreciation to General (Retired) Gerry Silva, former Commander of the Sri Lanka Army and High Commissioner to Pakistan; General (Retired) C. Srilal Weerasooriya, former Commander of the Sri Lanka Army and High Commissioner to Pakistan; Air Chief Marshal (Retired) Jayalath Weerakkody, former Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force and High Commissioner to Pakistan; Mr. M.D.D. Pieris, former Secretary to the Prime Minister; Ambassador Charlie Mahendran; Mr. K.D. Ranasinghe, Assistant Governor Central Bank of Sri Lanka; Mrs. Jeevani Siriwardena, Director General Sri Lanka Export Development Board; Mr. Senarath Wickramasinghe, Deputy

Director (Ethnology)-Department of National Museums, Sri Lanka; Dr. Saroja Wettasinghe, Director-Department of National Archives, Sri Lanka; Ms. Nalika Kodikara, Assistant Director of Commerce-Department of Commerce, Sri Lanka; Mr. Thilak Godamanna, President-National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka; Mr. Bandula Dissanayake, Secretary General- National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka; without whose contribution, sharing of experience and insights, the research work of this publication would not have been accomplished.

We are also indebted to the officers and staff of ISSRA, NDU, especially Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ilyas, Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Yaqub Abbasi, Major Bilal Amin, Ms. Qurat-ul-Ain, Ms. Nida, Ms. Seemab, Ms. Tooba and Mr. Muhammad Anees. We further appreciate the encouragement and efforts of Colonel Wipula Ihalage, Dean and the officers of the Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies, especially Lieutenant Colonel Chaminda Wijyaratne, Major Janaka Ranaraja of the Department of Strategic Studies-KDU as well as Lieutenant Colonel Deeptha Ariyasena, Adjutant-KDU; Major Chamika Jagoda, Assistant Adjutant-KDU and Major Lasantha Hemachandra for their dedication and devotion towards the mutual visits and completion of manuscripts. The editors would also like to extend their appreciation to Brigadier Upali Rajapakse, Dean-Faculty of Graduate Studies and Mr. Kithsiri Amaratunga, Head-Department of Languages in ensuring the manuscripts are of the highest scholarly quality. Their day-and-night efforts enabled us to finalise this publication.

The editors would further like to extend their warmest gratitude to each and every one, who has assisted the chapter authors and editors, in completing this publication titled *Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations: A Story of Friendship*, which is indeed a reflection of the cordial bilateral relations between the two South Asian countries.

March 2017

*Editors*



# Abbreviations

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APFEA	All Pakistan Furniture Manufacturers Exporters Association
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
BIA	Bandaranaike International Airport
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CEPA	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
CNS	Chief of Naval Staff
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSCL	Ceylon Shipping Corporation Limited
CTC	Cut, Tear and Curl
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
EDB	Export Development Board of Sri Lanka
ETCFA	Technical Cooperation Framework Agreement
FPCCI	Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GR	Gajaba Regiment
GW	Gamunu Watch
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Cricket Council
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IOMAC	Indian Ocean Maritime Affairs Cooperation
IONS	Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IOR-ARC	Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation
IORI	Indian Ocean Rim Initiative
IOZP	Indian Ocean Zone of Peace
JEC	Joint Economic Commission
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
KDU	General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University
LoC	Line of Credit
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

## *Abbreviations*

MBRL	Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MFN	Most Favoured Nation
MT	Metric Tonnes
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NDU	National Defence University
Nm	Nautical Miles
NTB	Non-Tariff Barriers
NWFZ	Nuclear Weapons Free Zone
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Countries
P2P	People-to-People
PAF	Pakistan Air Force
PCB	Pakistan Cricket Board
PIA	Pakistan International Airlines
PNSC	Pakistan National Shipping Corporation
PNWCAA	Pakistan's Naval War College Alumni Association
POF	Pakistan Ordnance Factory
PSFTA	Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing of India
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
SLBC	Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
SLFP	Sri Lankan Freedom Party
SLLI	Sri Lanka Light Infantry
SLMA	Sri Lanka Military Academy
SLOC	Sea Lane of Communications
SLSR	Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment
TAPI	Trans Afghanistan-Pakistan-India
TDAP	Trade Development Authority of Pakistan
TRQ	Tariff Rate Quota
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNP	United National Party
US	United States of America

# Political Map of South Asia



Source: <http://www.davidrumsey.com>





## Pakistan and Sri Lanka at a Glance

Salient Features	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
<b>Official Name</b>	Islamic Republic of Pakistan	Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
<b>Independence Day</b>	August 14, 1947	February 4, 1948
<b>Type of Government</b>	Republic	Republic
<b>Capital</b>	Islamabad	Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte
<b>Location and Border Countries</b>	South Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea in the South, India on the East (3190 km), Iran (959 km) and Afghanistan (2670 km) on the West and China in the North	South Asia, island in the Indian Ocean, south of India (29 km / 18 miles) and Maldives (1034 km / 624 miles)
<b>Area</b>	796,095 Sq. km.	65,525 Sq. km
<b>Coastline</b>	1,046 km	1,340 km
<b>Ports and Harbours</b>	Karachi, Bin Qasim and Gwadar	Colombo, Galle, Hambantota, Trincomalee, Kankasanthurai
<b>Highest Mountain</b>	K-2 (8616 m), Second highest in the world	Pidurutalagala (2,524 m)
<b>Climate</b>	Mostly hot, dry desert; temperate in the Northwest; arctic in the North	A tropical climate moderated by ocean winds
<b>Languages</b>	Urdu (national & official language) 8%, Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Saraiki 10%, Pashto 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, Burushaski, and other 8%	Sinhala and Tamil (national languages) spoken by 74%, 18% respectively. Other 8% (English is constitutionally recognised as the link language)



# **Part I**

## **Historical Perspectives**



# 1 A Historical Overview of Sri Lanka-Pakistan Relations: A Sri Lankan Perspective

*Professor Amal Jayawardane*

Religious and cultural links between Pakistan and Sri Lanka can be traced back to ancient times. Although Pakistan is predominantly a Muslim country today; it was home to a great Buddhist civilisation for over 1000 years. The whole of Northwest Pakistan, then known as Gandhara, emerged as a centre of Buddhist learning and culture from the first century BC to the seventh century AD. The Gandhara Civilisation produced some of the finest forms of Buddhist art in the world. The Gandhara Kingdom has been described as the “crossroads” of the world with its influence felt even in distant lands such as Sri Lanka. Scholars believe that there existed religious and cultural contacts between the ancient land of Pakistan and Sri Lanka during the Gandhara era.<sup>1</sup> The Government of Pakistan continues to excavate Buddhist archaeological sites and has taken special care to preserve the Buddhist heritage of the country, which has become a source of inspiration as well as a binding factor in Pakistan–Sri Lanka relations.

As Urmila Phadnis has observed, “Notwithstanding Ceylon’s close historical and cultural ties with both India and Pakistan, it appears that the new state of Pakistan had an initial vantage point over India . . . Unlike her relations with the South Indian Empires, which provided a source of ‘deep offense’ to the island’s kingdoms and affected to some extent the Indo-Ceylonese relations in their historical perspective, Ceylon’s contacts with Pakistan left behind no adverse historical hangover.”<sup>2</sup> The status of stateless Tamils of Indian origin had become a contentious issue between the governments of India and Sri Lanka during the immediate post-independence period. The illegal migration from South India had accentuated the concerns of those, who entertained fears about the possibility of aggression from India, particularly demographic pressure from South

India. However, the issue of Pakistani residents in Sri Lanka was not considered a major problem as the numbers involved were very small. As such, there were no historical problems to settle between the two “distant neighbours” – Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

The state of Pakistan was created in 1947, while Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948. Sri Lanka and Pakistan established diplomatic relations in 1948, and irrespective of which regime was in power at either end, the two countries have consistently supported each other ever since independence. As Shelton U. Kodikara pointed out, “From the perspective of the geostrategic environment of South Asia, Sri Lanka’s decision-makers took a bipartisan approach to Pakistan as a natural friend of Sri Lanka.”<sup>3</sup> During the first decade since independence, all Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka, except Mr. Dudley Senanayake, visited Pakistan (D. S. Senanayake in 1948; Sir John Kotelawala in 1954; S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in 1956).

During the post-independence period, there was a fundamental cleavage between India and her neighbours in so far as their geostrategic and security perceptions were concerned. Due to the Indo-centric nature of South Asia, the prospect of a Pax Indiana has dominated the security perceptions of India’s neighbours, who always feared Indian dominance.<sup>4</sup> In this context, it was natural to have a convergence of strategic interests between Sri Lanka and Pakistan. It should be noted clearly, however, that it was not on the basis of commonality of threat perceptions that Sri Lanka developed its cooperative partnership with Pakistan in the immediate post-independence period. Despite its apprehensions about India, Sri Lanka never tried to develop a strategic partnership with Pakistan against India. Sri Lanka’s policy was never a “Pro-Pakistan, Anti-India” stance. Sri Lanka was mindful of the implications of her geographical proximity to India, and therefore, wanted to maintain good neighbourly relations. Sri Lanka also wanted India’s cooperation in solving some of its bilateral problems such as the citizenship issue of stateless Tamils of Indian origin and the maritime boundary issue. Pakistan also appreciated Sri Lanka’s position of being a small country trying to assert its independence in the vicinity of a big neighbour. This mutual understanding of each other’s problems was an important factor, which enabled Pakistan and Sri Lanka to develop an “irritant free” relationship over the years since independence.

Rather than playing one country against the other, Sri Lanka preferred to work together with both India and Pakistan on regional and international issues. India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka became members of the Commonwealth soon after their independence, and were the first non-white dominions in the Commonwealth. They were among the eight countries, which adopted the London Declaration in April 1949, and in that sense, can be considered the founding members of the New Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Sri Lanka in January 1950 with the participation of all Commonwealth countries. It was considered a compliment to Sri Lanka as it was the first time that an Asian country had the opportunity to host a Commonwealth Meeting on Foreign Affairs.<sup>5</sup>

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala, took the initiative of convening a meeting of several newly independent Asian countries to discuss matters of common interest. The leaders of five Asian countries, namely, Burma, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon) participated in the Conference (which came to be known as the Meeting of Colombo Powers) held in Colombo and Kandy in April 1954. Kotelawala was very keen to secure the participation of both India and Pakistan and assured them that bilateral issues would not be raised at the meeting. As he later commented,

*At a time when feeling had run high between India and Pakistan, I was able to persuade the leaders of both countries to sit at a conference table to discuss issues affecting the interests of the whole region.*<sup>6</sup>

Pakistan was represented at the Colombo Powers' Meeting by its Prime Minister, Chaudhry Mohammed Ali, who subsequently participated in the Bogor (December 1954) and Bandung conferences (April 1955). Appreciating Sri Lanka's effort to convene the Colombo Conference, he made the following observation:

*Ceylon has demonstrated, as these Colombo meetings suggest, the value of small nations in the affairs of the world. Alone, they can accomplish little. Together, not only can they accomplish much, but they can often move into the intricacies of international problems with a freedom denied to great powers.*<sup>7</sup>

Even though it was proposed at the Bandung Conference to convene another conference in two years' time to discuss economic affairs, it did not materialise. Therefore, Sri Lanka's Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike took the initiative in 1958 to call for an Asian Economic Conference. Sri Lanka convened a preliminary meeting in Colombo from 25-28 May 1959, to discuss the possibility of holding an economic conference. Officials from four Colombo Power countries – India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – participated in this meeting.

For a small country, Sri Lanka has played a very active role in international affairs since the very beginning of her independence. She considered both India and Pakistan as important members of emerging Asia. In this context, rather than playing one country against the other, Sri Lanka always preferred to work together with both India and Pakistan in dealing with regional and international issues.

In 1954 Sir John Kotelawala first went to India for discussions on the citizenship issue of stateless Tamils in Sri Lanka. After long discussions with Indian Prime Minister Nehru, Kotelawala extended his visit to Pakistan. Commenting on this visit, he stated that,

*We went first to Karachi, where I had been invited to 'drop in on our way' by Mohammed Ali. We had a magnificent reception there, and we enjoyed ourselves for two days in Pakistan without inhibition and without a qualm. We had no problem to settle with Pakistan.*<sup>8</sup>

Sir John Kotelawala and Chaudhry Mohammad Ali had met each other on several occasions and had become close friends. "It is a pleasure," said Mohammad Ali, "to have known him and worked with him to serve the common interests of Ceylon and Pakistan."<sup>9</sup>

The government of Sri Lanka tried to remain neutral on the Kashmir issue. There were, however, some Muslim organisations in Sri Lanka, which supported the idea of self-determination for Kashmir.<sup>10</sup> There was an occasion, when India protested against the critical comments made by a Sri Lankan minister on the Kashmir issue. Minister of Social Services, T.B. Jaya, while attending the World Muslim Congress held in Karachi on 18-20 February 1949, criticised India's actions in Kashmir and Hyderabad. He presided over a session at this





This is a photograph of the Second Century A.D. Gandhara Buddha statue which was presented to Sir John Kotelawala by Prime Minister Mohammad Ali when he visited Sri Lanka for the Colombo Powers Conference in April 1954.<sup>11</sup>

congress, where a resolution was adopted condemning the “organised massacre of Muslims and inhuman atrocities on them in many parts of India.” Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sent a telegram to Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake on April 17, 1949, protesting against the accusations made by Minister Jaya. While acknowledging that Mr. Jaya attended the conference in his personal capacity and did not represent Sri Lanka’s government, Nehru was emphatic that “it is difficult to dissociate personal capacities from public capacities at public functions.”<sup>12</sup>

Since Sri Lanka wanted to maintain friendly relations with both India and Pakistan, she did not want to interfere in the internal affairs of either country. It is a well-known fact that the first three Prime Ministers of the UNP regime between 1948 and 1956 had considerable apprehensions about a possible threat from India. However, they all tried to maintain a non-committal position on the Kashmir dispute. Even S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who worked very closely with Jawaharlal Nehru, tried to be neutral on the Kashmir issue.

During Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike’s period, Pakistani President Mohammad Ayub Khan visited Sri Lanka on 8 December 1963, and the joint communique issued at the end of his week-long visit said,

“they recalled with regret the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and agreed that its expeditious solution in accordance with the UN Resolutions or by other peaceful means would be in the interest of peace in the subcontinent and in the region.”<sup>13</sup> As Birty Gajameragedera has noted, “This was the first reference that Ceylon made to the UN resolutions concerning the solution of the Kashmir dispute, and it undoubtedly represented a noteworthy gain for Pakistan’s regional diplomacy.”<sup>14</sup> Referring to the joint communique, a leading Pakistan newspaper, *Dawn*, made the following comment on 17 December 1963: “The people of Pakistan will note with great satisfaction the specific mention of the Kashmir dispute in the joint communique . . . . In spite of every attempt made by Mr. Nehru and his powerful propaganda machine to make it out that the dispute no longer exists, other nations of the Free World have not accepted that position. The Colombo Communique should serve as a reminder to Mr. Nehru that the UN resolutions, which call for a free and impartial plebiscite to decide the future of Kashmir, still very much hold the field.”<sup>15</sup>

Addressing a press conference during his visit to Sri Lanka in September 1964, the Indian Foreign Minister Mr. Swaran Singh said that “India does not accept, and Ceylon does not accept, that there can be any referendum relating to an integral part of a country.”<sup>16</sup> The Sri Lankan government issued a clarification in this regard by saying that “the question of Kashmir was not raised in the discussion that took place in Ceylon with Mr. Swaran Singh. . . . Ceylon’s position in regard to Kashmir has always been that the dispute should be settled in accordance with the UN resolutions or by any other peaceful means.”<sup>17</sup> It appears that the UNP led coalition Government, which came to power in 1965, too accepted the previous government’s policy. In fact, the Minister of State J.R. Jayewardene said in Parliament that the stand of the present government on the Kashmir question was the same as that of the previous government – that it should be settled in accordance with the UN resolutions or by peaceful means.<sup>18</sup>

Since the 1970s, particularly after the Simla Accord of 1972, Sri Lanka has not referred to the UN resolutions concerning the Kashmir issue. When they signed the Simla Agreement, India and Pakistan agreed to “settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations.”

A delegation from the Senate of Pakistan, which visited Sri Lanka in 2008, explained Sri Lanka's "middle course" on the Kashmir issue as follows: "In spite of significant Indian pressure on Colombo, successive Sri Lankan governments have taken a middle course on the Kashmir issue. If the Kashmir issue is raised at international forums, such as the Human Rights Commission or the UN General Assembly, the Sri Lankan position is to abstain from voting. Sri Lanka supports a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue through bilateral negotiations. Seen in the perspective of the critical need of Indian support to the Sri Lankan governments on the Tamil issue, their reluctance to annoy India is understandable."<sup>19</sup>

Sri Lanka's desire to maintain the regional power balance underscored its support for the territorial integrity of Pakistan. During the wars between India and Pakistan (1948 and 1965), Sri Lanka maintained strict neutrality. During the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, however, there were accusations that Sri Lanka veered towards Pakistan. During the East Pakistan crisis of 1971, India withdrew landing and overflying rights for Pakistan aircrafts from West to East Pakistan. At the request of Pakistan, Mrs. Bandaranaike allowed landing and refuelling facilities to PIA at Katunayake International Airport.<sup>20</sup> For Mrs. Bandaranaike, it was a difficult decision to make in view of her close personal relationship with Mrs. Indira Gandhi; however, she was more concerned about the territorial integrity of Pakistan and the power balance in the region. India charged that Pakistani troops disguised as civilians as well as military equipment were transported through Colombo to East Pakistan. India was annoyed with Sri Lanka's decision, but it did not cause a crisis in Indo-Sri Lankan relations. During the JVP uprising in April 1971, India was among the countries (UK, US, USSR, Yugoslavia, Egypt, and Pakistan) which rushed military assistance to support the government. Mrs. Gandhi later made a visit to Sri Lanka in April 1973. Since India did not have a major problem with Sri Lanka's overall foreign policy orientation, such irritants did not seriously damage the close relations that existed between the two countries.<sup>21</sup>

Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was very outspoken on Third World issues in the NAM, and Pakistan supported Sri Lanka's stand on many occasions. When the President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Mohammad

Ayub Khan visited Sri Lanka on 8 December 1963, the two leaders expressed their agreement on many issues such as nuclear disarmament, South Africa's apartheid policy as a grave violation of human rights, the need to eliminate remaining vestiges of colonialism, support for the principles and objectives of the UN Charter, promotion of Afro-Asian solidarity, and the need for regional economic cooperation.<sup>22</sup> During Sirimavo Bandaranaike's week-long visit to Pakistan on 4 September 1974, Pakistan declared its support for the IOZP proposal initiated by Sri Lanka at the UN.<sup>23</sup>

While Pakistan supported Sri Lanka's proposal for the IOZP, Sri Lanka also supported Pakistan's proposal for the establishment of a NWFZ in the South Asia and the Middle East. The joint communique issued at the end of Prime Minister Bhutto's visit to Sri Lanka on 19 December 1975 stated that the "two prime ministers agreed that to be meaningful the concept of the IOZP must be supplemented by a commitment by the littoral and hinterland states to a system of universal collective security, including the renunciation of the nuclear weapons option."<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, they saw that both proposals were complementary to each other.

Sri Lanka strongly supported Pakistan's entry into the NAM, and it was during Sri Lanka's chairmanship of the movement that Pakistan became a fully-fledged member of the NAM in September 1979.<sup>25</sup> Sri Lanka strongly opposed the suspension of Pakistan's membership in the Commonwealth at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala in November 2007. Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister vigorously campaigned for Pakistan's re-entry into the Commonwealth in 2008.<sup>26</sup>

Sri Lanka and Pakistan took a similar position on the issue of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Sri Lanka strongly condemned it as a violation of the independence and territorial integrity of a member of the non-aligned community. Pakistan was among the 24 non-aligned countries, which sponsored a UN resolution which condemned the Soviet invasion and called for the withdrawal of foreign troops.<sup>27</sup> President J.R. Jayewardene decided to support the UN resolution on Afghanistan and his decision has been criticised as a pro-Western foreign policy stand. It would be incorrect to interpret

J.R. Jayewardene's decision merely as an act of siding with Pakistan, US, and China. He took a principled position in order to safeguard Sri Lanka's own national interests. When he supported the principles of non-interference and non-intervention, he saw that it had practical relevance for a small country like Sri Lanka, which was facing outside interference in its internal affairs.<sup>28</sup> It was on the same basis that he refused to recognise Heng Samarin's government in Kampuchea as it had seized power with the support of external forces. Mrs. Gandhi took a different position on both issues and, therefore, the stand taken by Sri Lanka did not sit well with India.

### **Developments since the beginning of the 1980s**

There is no doubt that India was an important factor in the Sri Lanka-Pakistan equation. India was concerned about the growing ties between Sri Lanka and Pakistan since the beginning of the 1980s, especially in the defence sector. Sri Lanka was mindful of India's concerns but had no alternative other than to seek assistance from countries like Pakistan and China in order to meet the threats posed by the militant separatist movement in the country. Contrary to India's misperceptions, Sri Lanka never intended to use its relationship with Pakistan against India. The deterioration of the security situation at the global, regional, and domestic level aggravated Sri Lanka's predicament.<sup>29</sup>

By the end of the 1970s, the *détente* had collapsed and the Second Cold War between the super powers had begun. The deterioration of the security situation at the global-level coincided with the aggravation of tension between India and her neighbours. During the latter part of the 1970s, there were regime changes in several South Asian countries and all the new regimes were considered pro-Western (Moraji Desai in India; J.R. Jayewardene in Sri Lanka; Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan; Zia-ur-Rahman in Bangladesh). Except for India (Indira Gandhi came back to power in 1980), these regimes in other South Asian countries continued to wield power well into the late 1980s. India began to suspect that her neighbours were collaborating with the West to encircle and destabilise India. A pro-Soviet Indian newsmagazine, complained that "the harsh reality is that the Islamabad-Washington-Beijing axis is being extended and some countries such as Sri Lanka

are being brought into the system.”<sup>30</sup> India began to complain that President J.R. Jayewardene’s foreign policy orientation was injurious to India’s security interests.<sup>31</sup>

Sri Lanka’s ethnic problem also worsened in the 1980s. Following the ethnic riots in July 1983, Sri Lanka became a target of censure in the international community. Western countries, under the pressure of human rights lobbies, refused to give direct military assistance to Sri Lanka. In this context, Sri Lanka had to rely on countries like Pakistan and China for military equipment.

During his State Visit to Pakistan from 29 March to 4 April 1985, President J.R. Jayewardene said: “I thank your Excellency for your support of Sri Lanka’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and your actual help to defeat the violent forces that threaten to destroy them.”<sup>32</sup>

In his letter to J.R. Jayewardene on 22 May 1985, Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq said,

*It gives me great pleasure to inform Your Excellency that we shall be prepared to meet your government’s urgent requirements for training of personnel in accordance with the schedule suggested by the Sri Lanka armed forces authorities. As a humble contribution, which I hope your Excellency will accept, the government of Pakistan will bear all the expenses on the training of Sri Lanka personnel in Pakistan. I am also happy to inform your Excellency that we are in a position to meet the requirements of Sri Lanka in respect of the list of weapons indicated to them ....*<sup>33</sup>

President Zia, who visited Sri Lanka in December 1985, reiterated Pakistan’s military assistance to wipe out terrorism from the country. He insisted: “we cannot allow states to be wrecked from within . . .”<sup>34</sup> At the final press conference, an Indian newspaper editor asked him, “Your Excellency, is it true that you are giving weapons to Sri Lanka?” President Zia’s reply was: “Weapons? Weapons? If Sri Lanka only asks I will give them anything!”<sup>35</sup>

Following the July 1983 ethnic riots, Sri Lanka accepted India as a mediator in bringing about a political solution to the country’s

ethnic problem. Therefore, Pakistan and other South Asian countries too accepted that India had a role to play in the resolution of Sri Lanka's ethnic problem. However, Pakistan was critical of the dual role India played by supporting the separatist groups in Sri Lanka while undertaking a mediatory role with the government. Pakistan always took Sri Lanka's side when India posed a threat to Sri Lanka's sovereignty. When India violated Sri Lanka's air space in June 1987, Pakistan was among the very few countries, which criticised India's action.<sup>36</sup>

One can observe two salient features in Sri Lanka-Pakistan defence collaboration. First, Pakistan came to Sri Lanka's assistance at a time, when other countries, except for a few, were refusing to give direct military aid. Secondly, Pakistan always obliged Sri Lanka's requests for urgent military aid. For example, there was a military crisis in Jaffna during the period April-June 2000. After the fall of the Elephant Pass military complex on 22 April 2000, the LTTE continued to press towards Jaffna, and the Palalai Airport came under severe attack. There was fear that the LTTE was poised to take over Jaffna. In that scenario, the question on everyone's mind was who would facilitate the withdrawal of military forces from Jaffna. India insisted that it would not intervene militarily, but expressed its willingness to help politically in resolving the crisis, if requested to do so by both parties. It was at this moment that Pakistan promptly came to Sri Lanka's assistance by way of immediately rushing Multi Barrel Rocket Launchers (MBRLs).<sup>37</sup> In an emergency operation, they were airlifted from Karachi to Colombo in May 2000 to be deployed in the Jaffna Peninsula for the first time. With the help of this new weapon system, the Sri Lankan military forces were able to repulse the LTTE offensive and protect Jaffna.

It is clearly evident from Pakistan's interactions with Sri Lanka that it always had a special place for Sri Lanka. Some would argue that it is an expression of Pakistan's gratitude towards Sri Lanka for providing transit and refuelling facilities to Pakistan aircraft in its hour of need in 1971. However, even before 1971, there were numerous occasions, which demonstrated Pakistan's readiness to be as helpful as possible to Sri Lanka. This is evident in the following statement made

by Sir John Kotelawala, when he was the Minister of Transport and Works,

*My earliest associations with Pakistan on a political level began when I visited that country when the late Liaquat Ali Khan was its Prime minister. I was then seeking a bilateral air agreement and anticipated hard bargaining and long-drawn-out talks. But instead they were very cooperative. In one sequence, the Prime Minister of Pakistan settled the basis of our negotiations – ‘Ceylon is our friend,’ the Pakistan Premier told his Minister for Aviation, ‘Ceylon will not ask for anything unreasonable. Give her whatever she wants.’ That was the spirit of Pakistan’s attitude of good neighbourliness and friendship for this country. It is an attitude that has consistently underlined her policy towards Ceylon – one of faith in our good intentions and a generosity somewhat rare in modern international relations.<sup>38</sup>*

In the 1980s, when Sri Lanka was targeted at various international fora, Pakistan consistently provided its unstinted diplomatic support to Sri Lanka.<sup>39</sup> Even during the post-war period, Pakistan has always sided with Sri Lanka, when resolutions were brought against her at the UNHRC sessions in Geneva. For example, when the UNHRC in Geneva adopted a resolution on March 27, 2014, demanding an international investigation into alleged war crimes in Sri Lanka, Pakistan made a strong objection saying that the resolution was highly counter-productive and any interference into the internal affairs of Sri Lanka was “intolerable and in contradiction with the Charter of the UN. An international investigation by the Office of the High Commissioner was a clear violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka....”<sup>40</sup> During a meeting with Pakistan’s new High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Major General (Rtd.) Syed Shakeel Hussain, Sri Lanka’s President Maithripala Sirisena is reported to have said, “Your Ambassador in Geneva fought for us as if he was fighting for his own country.”<sup>41</sup>

## **Conclusion**

It is evident from the above discussion that Sri Lanka has been able to develop a cordial and mutually beneficial relationship with



Pakistan over a period of seven decades since its independence. One may argue that the end of the war in Sri Lanka has lessened the importance of its defence collaboration with Pakistan. Even though, the urgency of military assistance is no longer there, the defence collaboration in the form of military training, procurement of equipment and intelligence-sharing between the two countries will continue even without a war situation. Additionally, continued cooperation is required in other related areas such as counterterrorism and measures against transnational crimes. For example, during the recent visit of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in January 2016, the two countries signed an agreement to exchange financial intelligence to prevent money laundering and terrorism financing.

Sri Lanka and Pakistan have also developed a multi-faceted relationship in many other areas such as trade and commerce, education, science and technology, culture, and P2P interactions. However, these bilateral relationships need to be further strengthened. For example, the two countries entered into an FTA on 9 February 2005, and Sri Lanka was the first country to sign an FTA with Pakistan. However, the progress achieved is far from satisfactory. At present, the volume of trade between the two countries is approximately US \$ 325 million, which does not reflect the true potential of their bilateral trade. During Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Sri Lanka in January 2016, both countries agreed to set a target of US \$ 1 billion in bilateral trade to be reached by the year 2017.<sup>42</sup> It was also emphasised that the scope of the FTA should be liberalised and expanded from goods to services and investment. Given the goodwill prevailing between the two countries, there is much potential for future growth.

## Notes

- 
- <sup>1</sup> A.D.T.E. Perera, "Colossal Buddha Images of Ancient Sri Lanka," <http://www.infolanka.com/org/srilanka/hist/13.htm> (accessed April 29, 2016).
- <sup>2</sup> Urmila Phadnis, "Ceylon and India – Pakistan Conflict," *South Asian Studies*, Vol.2, No.1 (January 1967), 40-41
- <sup>3</sup> Shelton U. Kodikara (2008), *Domestic Politics and Diplomacy: A Study of Linkage Politics in Indo-Sri Lanka Relations* (Colombo: Gunasiri Printers and Publishers Pvt. Ltd.), 26.
- <sup>4</sup> Amal Jayawardane, "Changes in Power structure and Security Perceptions in the South Asian Sub-system," in P.V.J. Jayasekera (ed.), *Security Dilemma of a Small State*, Part One (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1992), 291-294.
- <sup>5</sup> Nayani Melegoda (2000), *The Policies of Three Prime Ministers of Ceylon: 1948-1956* (Mulleriyawa: Wijesooriya Grantha Kendraya), 115.
- <sup>6</sup> Sir John Kotelawala (1956), *An Asian Prime Minister's Story* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.), 112.
- <sup>7</sup> P. Nadesan (ed.), 1991, *This Man Kotelawala: Reflections on his Life and Work* (Ranco Printers and Publishers Ltd.), 109.
- <sup>8</sup> Kotelawala. *An Asian Prime Minister's Story*, 126.
- <sup>9</sup> Nadesan, *This Man Kotelawala*, 111.
- <sup>10</sup> Phadnis, "Ceylon and India-Pakistan Conflict," 53-54.
- <sup>11</sup> This statue is now placed at the Kotelawala Museum (his former residence) located in the premises of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. He gifted his estate to the government in July 1979 to establish a defence academy in Sri Lanka.
- <sup>12</sup> Avtar Singh Bhasin (ed.), 2001, *India-Sri Lanka Relations and Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict – 1947-2000*, Vol. I. (New Delhi: India Research Press, Document 2, p. 3.
- <sup>13</sup> Amal Jayawardane (ed.), 2005. *Documents on Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy, 1947-1965* (Colombo: Ceylon Printers Ltd.), Document No. 131, p. 240. During his seven-day state visit President Ayub Khan was given the opportunity to address a joint meeting of members of both Houses of Parliament. An Honourary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him at a special convocation of the University of Ceylon in Peradeniya.
- <sup>14</sup> Birty Gajameragedara (2011), *Sri Lanka and the Powers* (Godage International Publishers PVT Ltd.), 171-172.
- <sup>15</sup> *Dawn*, as quoted in Ibid. 172.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid. 173.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Bhasin, *India-Sri Lanka*, Document 26, P. 43.
- <sup>19</sup> Senate of Pakistan: Pakistan Worldview, "Visit to Sri Lanka, June 2008," Foreign Relations Committee <http://www.foreignaffairscommittee.org>, p. 21-22.
- <sup>20</sup> A.J. Wilson (1974), *Politics in Sri Lanka, 1947-1973* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.), 269.

<sup>21</sup> Shelton U. Kodikara (1982), *Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka: A Third World Perspective* (Delhi: Chanakya Publishers), 28.

<sup>22</sup> Jayawardane, *Documents on Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy*, 239-240.

<sup>23</sup> Sabiha Hasan, "Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 38, No.2 (Second Quarter 1985), 112-113.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 114.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>26</sup> "Foreign Minister spearheads Pakistan's reentry into the Commonwealth," accessed May 15, 2006, <http://www.mea.gov.lk/index.php/si/media/news-archive/1259-foreign-minister-spearheads-pakistans-re-entry-into-the-commonwealth>

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>28</sup> Amal Jayawardane, "Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy Under J.R. Jayewardene and Ranasinghe Premadasa, 1977-1993," in *Security Dilemma of a Small State*, Part Two, ed. by Mahinda Werake & P.V.J. Jayasekera (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1995), 209-210.

<sup>29</sup> Amal Jayawardane, "The Soviet Attitude Towards the Indo-Sri Lankan Problem," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 64, No.3 (Summer 1991), 195-197.

<sup>30</sup> As quoted in Jayawardane, "Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy," 215.

<sup>31</sup> For example, see the exchange of letters between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lanka's President J.R. Jayewardene on the eve of the signing of the Indo- Sri Lanka Peace Accord of July 1987. Here President Jayewardene has promised to meet several security concerns raised by India. See, Shelton U. Kodikara (ed.), *Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987* (Dehiwela: Sridevi Printers Private Ltd., 1989), 213-214.

<sup>32</sup> J.R. Jayewardene (1988), *My Quest for Peace: A Collection of Speeches on International Affairs* (Singapore: Stamford Press Ltd.), 158.

<sup>33</sup> Bhasin, *India - Sri Lanka*, Document 74, 151.

<sup>34</sup> As quoted in Amal Jayawardane, "The Response of External Powers to India's Involvement in Sri Lanka," in Werake & Jayasekera, *Security Dilemma of a Small State*, 247.

<sup>35</sup> As quoted in, General (R) G.H. de Silva. *A Most Noble Profession: Memoirs that Linger* (Colombo: Champika Printers, 2011), 61.

<sup>36</sup> Moonis Ahmer, "Pakistan-Sri Lankan Relations and the Indian Response," in Sumanasiri Liyanage, P. Sahadevan and Anisha Kinra (ed.), *Intra-State Conflict and Inter-State Relations: Perspectives on India-Sri Lanka Relations*, Manak Pub., 2011, 178.

<sup>37</sup> Gerry H. de Silva, "Pakistan - Sri Lanka Relations: Military and Strategic Dimensions," *Pakistan - Sri Lanka Relations* (Proceedings of a One-Day Seminar), (Islamabad: Institute of Strategic studies, 1997), 27.

<sup>38</sup> Kotelawala's broadcast talk over Radio Ceylon on August 14 on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day, *Ceylon Today*, Vol. II, No. 8 September 1953, 28-29.

<sup>39</sup> See, Kalyananda Godage, "Pakistan - Sri Lanka Relations: Political Dimension," in *Pakistan - Sri Lanka Relations* (Proceedings of a One-Day Seminar), Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, 2004, 74-75.

*Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations: A Story of Friendship*

<sup>40</sup> “Human Rights Council Adopts a Resolution on Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka,” <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14447&LangID=E> (Accessed on May 18, 2016).

<sup>41</sup> As quoted in <http://tamilguardian.com/article.asp?articleid=14725>. (Accessed on April 18, 2016).

<sup>42</sup> “Pakistan – SL Trade Ties Should Equal Political Ties,” *Island*, January 6, 2016.

## 2 A Historical Outlook of Pakistan–Sri Lanka Relations

*Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Basit*

History of Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations are traced in Buddha's time spent in Taxila, centuries ago. Buddhism, the major religion of Sri Lanka, finds its deep links in the areas, which later became part of Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> Taxila is the abode of many splendid Buddhist establishments. In this context, people of the two countries find a lot to share in terms of sociocultural practices. Their relationships are attributed to amity, close friendship and are deep-rooted in the history of both nations. These relations were not accidental in nature, rather they were deliberately developed keeping in focus all the socio-political and strategic dimensions. Timing of strengthening the bondage was very critical.

The interesting aspect is that both countries neither share boundaries, nor religious concord; yet they emerged as the strongest allies to each other despite India falling in between the geographical link of the two countries. India too, has its relevance in the region owing to its size, geopolitical location and as an emerging economy. India shares its boundaries with almost all the member states of SAARC, but none of the regional countries shares boundaries with each other. South Asia is marked with immense intricacies. This region is neither listed as underdeveloped as Africa nor developed as Europe or America. It has its own problems such as poverty, historical rivalries, water crisis, nuclear arms race, external power intervention, terrorism and the Kashmir issue.

Pakistan has many historic sites of religious values including the Birth place of Guru Nanak, Nankana Sahib and Gurdwara Panja Sahib, Hassan Abdal for Sikh religion, and Buddhist stupas in Taxila for Buddhist religion.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of pilgrims visit these sites every year for spiritual fulfilment and adoration. The archaeological sites in

Taxila, adjoining Pakistan's capital Islamabad, are living testimony to the fact that Gandhara Trail was a part of the Silk Route and many Buddhist pilgrims from different countries used to visit these sites. Therefore, it is not only the pilgrims from India, but Sri Lankans also pay homage to Pakistan because of their religious and spiritual attachment to these sites that Pakistan has preserved for them. Apart from its religious connotation, Gandhara is considered important for Sri Lankans due to their cultural continuation.<sup>3</sup> During the year 2 BC, Buddhism was adopted as the state religion, which flourished and prevailed for over 1,000 years, until the year 10 AD.<sup>4</sup> During this time, Taxila, Swat and Charsadda (old Pushkalavati) became three important centres for culture, trade and learning. Hundreds of monasteries and stupas were built together with Greek and Kushan towns such as Sirkap and Sirsukh.

The Gandhara Civilisation was not only the centre of spiritual influence, but also the cradle of the world famous Gandhara culture, art and learning. It was from these centres that a unique art of sculpture originated, which is known as Gandhara Art all over the world.<sup>5</sup> Today, the Gandhara sculptures occupy a prominent place in the museums of England, France, Germany, the US, Japan, Korea, China, India and Afghanistan, together with many private collections world over, as well as a vast collection in the museums of Pakistan. Buddhism left a monumental and rich legacy of art and architecture in Pakistan. Despite the passage of centuries, the Gandhara region preserved a lot of the heritage in art and craft. Much of this legacy is visible in Pakistan even today.<sup>6</sup>

The diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka commenced soon after the inception of the latter in 1948. Since then, both states have constantly been supporting each other at all regional and international fora, which paved the way for a more coherent and cordial relationship.<sup>7</sup> In 1971, Pakistan extended all-out support and assistance to Sri Lanka, when JVP created turbulence inside Sri Lanka.<sup>8</sup> Pakistan's timely help normalised the situation, which added to already existing profound association between the two friendly states. Sri Lanka is also one of the primal associates that extended full-length support during the most difficult times in the national history of Pakistan.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka are two vibrant members of SAARC, comprising of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The organisation was conceived by Bangladesh during President Zia-ur-Rehman regime, which aimed at providing the regional countries a platform for the creation of a trade bloc, to enhance the economic cooperation among the member countries. However, this organisation could not bear desirable fruit due to conventional rivalry between India and Pakistan as every matter is overshadowed and affected by this phenomenon.<sup>9</sup>

The platform, however, set a viable and approving stage for Pakistan and Sri Lanka to promote their mutual ties giving it a new-fangled and multidirectional proposition.<sup>10</sup> The South Asian nations have differences among themselves, which is occasionally visible at the forum of SAARC especially in the context of India-Pakistan. Incidentally, none of the SAARC member states shares borders with each other except India. Therefore, the diversity among the countries have led to bilateral relations, which are stronger than the multilateral relations aspired by the SAARC. However, Pakistan is always aspirant for the territorial integrity and political independence of South Asian states.

Though, the relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka are not India specific; nor have they a common agenda of targeting India as a common rival, yet the latter is maintaining a fine balance between Pakistan and India. The fact is that Sri Lanka has engaged India more in terms of economic and religious relations than Pakistan.<sup>11</sup> Relations between both countries are based on respect for each other beyond any prejudice or bias. Historically, as mentioned earlier, Pakistan–Sri Lanka relations are thousands of years old since the times of Gandhara Civilisation and it has played a vital role in keeping these two countries close enough. This civilisational link is the reason that Sri Lanka has its admiration and natural inclination for Pakistan. However, it is understandable that Sri Lanka does have its limitations due to its political structure and various other constraints. From Sri Lanka's birth till now, it is noteworthy that in its foreign policy making, it is being influenced not only by global balance of power but by regional balance of power as well including India, China and Pakistan.

In case of Pakistan, the dealings started with open and pleasant note. Moving on to Sri Lanka's bonding with Pakistan, as both are located in the same region, both are members of many regional and global organisations at the same time such as the UN, Commonwealth, NAM and SAARC; that is why both states are equally significant for each other. In 1980, Arms embargo was imposed on Sri Lanka by the US and European states, thus, Pakistan showed its friendly gesture to the state by standing with it in the time of difficulty.

A thread of relations between the two countries is picked up from the time of independence of Sri Lanka in 1948. The friendly visit of Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, the former President of Pakistan, during 1960s played a pivotal role to bring these nations closer to each other. Moreover, the presentation of Buddha's meditating figurine to Sri Lankan government increased the love and respect in the hearts of Sri Lankan people and their government. Relations were further augmented during 1971 war between India and Pakistan. Mrs. Bandaranaike was holding the office of Prime Minister in Sri Lanka at that time. She was in good terms with Mrs. Indra Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. Mrs. Bandaranaike, a lady of principles, wanted to ensure that sovereignty and territorial integrity of states were maintained in the best interest of the region. Therefore, she worked towards this end, despite her friendship.

India had warned Sri Lanka of grave results against their decision to help Pakistan, but nothing could move Sri Lankan Premier from her principled stance. Pakistan was extended the facility of refuelling their aircrafts to subsequently operate in the East Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> This was a great favour to Pakistan, which provided an unshakable basis for the warm and friendly relationship between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Though, Pakistan lost that war at the end, but could not ignore the benign support accrued from, as termed by Indian leadership, the 'unpopular' decision of Mrs. Bandaranaike.

Pakistan did not take much time to recover from the wounds of 1971-war against India vis-a-vis excruciating betrayal from the Bengali rebels and started restructuring its military and economic profiles with an aim to face any eventuality or misadventure from any hostile country. General Zia-ul-Haq, the former President of Pakistan developed true friendly relations with Sri Lanka as he paid a 5-day visit



to the picturesque and scenic Sri Lanka in 1986. The visit received a lot of personal and warm touches by the hosts and paved the way for more profound relations with Sri Lankan brothers. General Zia stayed in an informal manner, his attribute was to mix up with common folk standing along roadsides to chant slogans of Pakistan-Sri Lanka friendship. He would reciprocate warm and touching response to the masses.



General Zia-ul-Haq visit to Sri Lanka

**Source:** Sri Lankan Army: 50 Years On (1949-1999)

Once, he was passing by a Sri Lankan village and saw a little boy fluttering Pakistani flag to welcome the President. General Zia got down from his vehicle and took the lad in his lap, held him tight against his chest for a long time and gave him all the money, he had kept in his pocket. That is indeed true friendship; the two countries cherish. Many strategic decisions were also taken during this visit; focusing the capacity building of Sri Lankan armed forces. Pursuant to the decision, one of the prominent senior officers from Pakistani Special Services Group, Brigadier Tariq Mahmood was assigned the responsibility to train and raise a contingent of Special Trained Infantry Troops in Sri Lankan Army. To achieve this, requisite equipment was provided.

The action from Pakistani leadership spread a wave of concern among the Indian hierarchy, who started propagating and exploiting

the phenomenon to malign Pakistan and Sri Lanka at international forums. On the other hand, support from Pakistan in all the domains continued unequivocally. President Zia was aware of the fact that present Sri Lankan Army lacked requisite infrastructure and training to face any internal or external challenge. He was ready to do anything whatever was required in this context. General Zia also instructed his staff to inform him about the arrival of any Sri Lankan delegation visiting Pakistan; he would take time from his schedule to meet Sri Lankan guests.<sup>13</sup>

Pakistan was cognizant of the situation rising in Sri Lanka and kept a keen eye on the developments in the region. Any abnormal situation, whenever observed, was shared with the Sri Lankan government to enable them to take measures against the developments to avert any untoward happening. Pakistan also realised the need of capacity building of Sri Lankan armed forces and decided to allocate vacancies for Sri Lankan cadets in the military training institutes of Pakistan. Though, this collaboration in the training of officers was already functional in almost all the schools of instruction working under the auspices of the Pakistan Army, the first batch of 45 cadets was enrolled in Officers Training School at Mangla Cantt in 1985.

Meanwhile, the turmoil in Sri Lanka developed into full-fledged terrorism challenging the writ of state by killing innocent population in an indiscriminate manner. The series of violence caused Sri Lanka a lot of cost in terms of men and material. Soft targets were selected to instil a wave of panic and fright to force the masses rise against their government.<sup>14</sup> However, this tactic did not work rather proved counterproductive as the nation found an opportunity to stand united with a will to eliminate the menace with a firm resolve and national integration. In 1989, Ranasinghe Premadasa was elected as the President of Sri Lanka. He was keen to take serious measures against violent behaviour of the LTTE and its auxiliary components. His strict policies were not welcomed by his opponents; thus, a negative propaganda was initiated against him to malign his firm resolve. On the other hand, Pakistan was fully aware of the tactical moves taking place in the region and passed the information to Sri Lankan officials so that any untoward incident be avoided to take place.

The LTTE was the only terrorist group in the world, which had once possessed its own military. The organisation was founded in 1976, however, they started their armed campaign in Sri Lanka for a separate Tamil homeland in 1983.<sup>15</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in its 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008 report, said that the LTTE was one of the most dangerous and deadly extremist outfits in the world.<sup>16</sup> The terrorists began to strike soft targets including police, schools, bus stands and markets, which posed grave challenges for the security forces to maintain peace and harmony in the country. Sri Lanka had entered into a peace accord with India, thus, allowed Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) to oversee the prospects. However, the LTTE insurgents murdered thousands of people and crippled the country with violently-enforced general strikes for two years. Subsequently, the Sri Lankan forces won a decisive military victory.

Pakistan–Sri Lanka relations underwent a significant phase of their history during 1999-2000 and onwards. The relations were important on two accounts; one was that Army Chiefs of both countries, General Pervez Musharraf and Lieutenant General C.S. Weerasooriya had been the best friends for about 40 years. General Srilal was commissioned from Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul and happened to be an immediate junior to General Musharraf. They had been keeping the warmth of comradeship and amity since their cadetship at the academy. Secondly, the Air Chief and the Naval Chief of Sri Lanka were also graduates from Pakistani institutes. It provided ideal environment for both militaries to take the relations to unprecedented stature.

### **Elephant Pass**

Since 1760, Elephant Pass has been considered a key military base that was first built by the Portuguese and later rebuilt by the Dutch in 1776 followed by the British. In 1952, the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) built a military base there. Despite many attempts to capture the area by the LTTE, it remained under the SLA control till 2000. In the main battle of Elephant Pass in 1991, the LTTE endured overwhelming losses while attempting to seize the Pass. The base was utilised as a springboard for various SLA offensives during the 1990s, including Operation Yal Devi (named after the Colombo-Jaffna train)

in September 1993 and Operation Sath Jaya.<sup>17</sup> Elephant Pass controls access to the Jaffna landmass; consequently, it is alluded to as the Gateway to Jaffna for its strategic significance.



Jaffna District

Source: <http://singhalaya.blogspot.com/2009/01/lttes-most-fortified-northern-garrison.html>

The fights between the SLA and the LTTE rose to the maximum during 1999-2000. On 22 April 2000, after intense fighting, LTTE rebels penetrated the central base and caused serious damage. Their motive was to attack the Elephant Pass from multiple directions.<sup>18</sup> The battle of Elephant Pass, is considered as the largest military debacle in the history of Sri Lanka. As the situation mounted to its gravity, the Sri Lankan government decided to seek help from Pakistan. General Weerasooriya of Sri Lanka, a professional Army Chief, who did not believe in surrender to the Tamil rebels, discussed the critical situation with General Musharraf. They believed that an impending withdrawal from Elephant Pass would be humiliating for the Sri Lankan Army. General Musharraf timely responded to Sri Lankan request and also promised to give all kind of assistance. The next day, Director Military Operations of the Sri Lankan Army flew to Jaffna to receive professional team of trainers, who were later actively involved in the operations against the LTTE. The timely help from Pakistan saved the Sri Lankan Army from retreat and also helped them to push back LTTE rebels.<sup>19</sup>

In 2006, the fighting between SLA and the LTTE renewed for control of Jaffna peninsula. In this battle, both sides sustained huge losses of men and material. In January 2009, after a major offensive launched by Sri Lankan Armed Forces, they were successful in recapturing Elephant Pass. In the final blow against the LTTE, fierce fighting occurred between SLA and the LTTE.<sup>20</sup> On 18 May 2009, the reports were circulating that Velupillai Prabhakaran, the founder and leader of the LTTE, killed in a rocket attack, but this was not true. Meanwhile, clearing and mopping-up operations were carried out by troops of SLA, but they did not encounter the last group of LTTE fighters that day. The next morning, the operation started again and this time they were confronted by the fighters of that group. A severe fighting went on between the rebels and SLA and finally it was stopped, when all the rebels were killed.<sup>21</sup>

### **Conclusion**

History of Pakistan and Sri Lanka relations is very rich on many accounts. Both countries have significant geographical locations at the crossroads of trade routes in the region. Both have close proximity to a large neighbour India with its hegemonic design in the region. Pakistan understands Sri Lankan needs and compulsions and always open enough to give space to nurture its relationship with India according to their national interest. Pakistan is also hopeful that other regional powers would understand that it is in the favour of both Sri Lanka and Pakistan to maintain cordial relations with each other for a peaceful South Asia.

## Notes

---

- <sup>1</sup> Gombrich, Richard Francis, Richard Gombrich, and Gananath Obeyesekere. *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*. Vol. 8. Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1988.
- <sup>2</sup> Mehmood, Anjum, and A. M. Shahid. "Digital reconstruction of Buddhist historical sites (6th BC-2nd AD) at Taxila, Pakistan (UNESCO, world heritage site)." In *Virtual Systems and Multimedia, 2001. Proceedings. Seventh International Conference on*, pp. 177-182. IEEE, 2001.
- <sup>3</sup> Samad, Rafi U. *The Grandeur of Gandhara: The Ancient Buddhist Civilization of the Swat, Peshawar, Kabul and Indus Valleys*. Algora Publishing, 2011.
- <sup>4</sup> Allchin, Bridget, and Raymond Allchin. *The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan*. Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- <sup>5</sup> Galli, Marco. "Hellenistic Court Imagery in the Early Buddhist Art of Gandhara." *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 17, no. 2 (2011): 279-329.
- <sup>6</sup> Khan, Ahmad Nabi. *Buddhist Art and Architecture in Pakistan*. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Directorate of Research, Reference and Publications, Government of Pakistan, 1976.
- <sup>7</sup> Baxter, Craig, ed. *Government and politics in South Asia*. Westview Press, 2002.
- <sup>8</sup> Gunaratna, Rohan. *Indian intervention in Sri Lanka: The Role of India's intelligence agencies*. South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1993.
- <sup>9</sup> Khan, Ahmad Raza. "Impediments to the Success of SAARC." *South Asian Studies* 30, no. 1 (2015): 291.
- <sup>10</sup> Nufile, A. A. M., S. Santhirasegaram, and S. M. M. Ismail. "Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (PSFTA): A Comparison with SAARC and SAFTA." *International Journal of Accounting and Business Management*, No. 1 (2013): 145-160.
- <sup>11</sup> Baxter, Craig, ed. *Government and Politics in South Asia*. Westview Press, 2002.
- <sup>12</sup> Dos Santos, Anne Noronha. *Military Intervention and Secession in South Asia: the cases of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, and Punjab*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007.
- <sup>13</sup> Interview with MDD Peris, ex Secretary to Mrs Bandaranaike in February 2016 at Colombo.
- <sup>14</sup> Uyangoda, Jayadeva. "The LTTE and Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka." *Ethnic Subnationalist Insurgencies in South Asia: Identities, Interests and Challenges to State Authority* (2015): 101.
- <sup>15</sup> Philipson, Liz. "The LTTE and the Politics of the Northeast." *Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: Caught in the Peace Trap?* (2010): 106.
- <sup>16</sup> FBI. *Taming the Tamil Tigers*. 2008. Retrieved from [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)
- <sup>17</sup> Jeyaraj, D. B. S. "The taking of Elephant Pass." *Frontline*, vol 17 (10)(online) (2000).
- <sup>18</sup> Ganguly, Rajat. "Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict: at a Crossroad between Peace and

War.” *Third World Quarterly*, No. 5 (2004): 903-918.

<sup>19</sup> Sislin, John, and Frederic Pearson. “Arms and Escalation in Ethnic Conflicts: The Case of Sri Lanka.” *International Studies Perspectives*, No. 2 (2006): 137-158.

<sup>20</sup> Peebles, Patrick. *The History of Sri Lanka*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> De Silva, Kingsley M. *Sri Lanka and the Defeat of the LTTE*. Penguin UK, 2012.





## **Part II**

# **Geostrategic and Defence Dimensions**



### 3 Pakistan–Sri Lanka Relations: A Politico-Strategic Outlook

*Colonel Dr. Muhammad Saif-ur-Rehman, TI(M)*

Political dimension of relations pave the way for rest of the targets, goals, objectives and ambitions, etc., in the bilateral relations among the nations. Prior to exploring the history of political ties between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, it is imperative to have a precise review of the basis for developing political relations. In case of Pakistan, there is a need to mention a brief account of factors essentially required to be catered for while developing political ties; one has to look into the basis and goals of her foreign policy. The foreign policy of a country is usually shaped up by its domestic policies and internal needs. It is not formulated on absolute footings rather it keeps adjusting as per the situation at home and abroad.

#### **Basis of Pakistan Foreign Policy**

The core principles of Pakistan's foreign policy are its ideology and national integration. Though, Pakistan, like Sri Lanka, inherited the legacy of external policies from the British era, nevertheless, necessary changes were incorporated just after the inception considering ideological factors and objectives of its creation.

The Father of the Nation, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah himself defined Foreign Policy in 1948, as follows:

*Our Foreign Policy is one of friendliness and good-will towards all the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the policy of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our outmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed of the United Nations Charter.<sup>1</sup>*

The Constitution of Pakistan also lays down guidelines for the conduct of foreign policy of the country. Article 40 of the constitution provides that:

*The State shall endeavour to ... promote international peace and security, foster goodwill and friendly relations among all nations and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.*<sup>2</sup>

The foreign policy of Pakistan is primarily directed to the pursuit of national goals of seeking peace and stability through international cooperation. Special emphasis is laid on economic diplomacy to take advantages offered by the process of globalisation as also to face challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Pakistan's foreign policy is also geared to project the image of the country as a dynamic and moderate society. It seeks to promote internationally recognised norms of interstate relations, i.e., respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states; non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes. Pakistan has, therefore, always sought to develop friendly and cordial relations with all countries of the world.<sup>3</sup>

Evolution of the basic principles of Pakistan's foreign policy is attributed to the following factors: -

- **National Security:** Safeguarding National Security has been the most essential element of Pakistan's foreign policy since its independence. Pakistan's national security is mainly vulnerable from the Eastern border as being threatened by India due to the incomplete agenda of partition inherited from British rulers in the form of unresolved core issue of Kashmir. This has already led to wars between India and Pakistan. It is, therefore, pertinent for Pakistan to safeguard its national security and geostrategic interests including Kashmir as foreign policy objective.
- **Economic Interest:** Pakistan as a developing country required to establish and maintain cordial relations with those states that can optimise its trade relations or from whom it can obtain maximum economic dividends.

- **Preservation of Ideology:** Pakistan pursues its relations with rest of the world without compromising its ideological objective.
- **Peaceful Coexistence:** Pakistan believes in peaceful coexistence, while respecting the other countries' territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-interference in other's domestic affairs.
- **Non-Alignment:** Pakistan had followed the policy of neutrality and had not aligned itself with any dominating world player. When NAM was formed, it joined and remained an active member of NAM.
- **Bilateralism:** Pakistan has tried to settle its differences with neighbouring countries including India through bilateral negotiations.
- **Support to the UN:** Pakistan has firm faith in the UN and has extended full support to UN actions by contributing peacekeeping forces as well as professionals for implementing its peace agenda.

### **Pakistan–Sri Lanka Political Relations**

The political environment of the South Asian region was quite assertive during the World War II era, therefore, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah paid a visit to Kandy, Ceylon in 1943. This very first visit of the Father of the Nation established political contact between both sides. The Muslims of Sri Lanka supported the struggle of Muslims of the subcontinent for a separate homeland. Therefore, connection of political relations was set even before independence and continuation of this process was witnessed in the successive years just after the independence of both Pakistan and Sri Lanka in 1947 and 1948 respectively.

In order to maintain political relations, there are a number of commonalities between the two countries as under: -

- British legacy as both nations were under British rule.
- Geographical locations as both countries fall in to the South Asian region.

- Both are active members of the SAARC.
- Both have common politico-economic and strategic interests.
- Both have the resolve to pace with the developed world without compromising sovereignty, peace and stability.



Sri Lanka (Ceylon) First Prime Minister D.S. Senanayaka with Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Father of the Nation of Pakistan in 1948

**Source:** Sri Lankan High Commission

Pakistan-Sri Lanka political relations, stretched over more than six decades, are marked on solid footings of bilateralism. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1948 onwards, both sides have followed the principles of mutual respect, promotion of bilateral interests and reciprocity. All successive regimes at both sides followed the same line of action. However, Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations can be divided into three phases as under: -

- Phase I: Warm-up Phase (1950s-1970s)
- Phase II: Pre-Take off Phase (1980s-1990s)
- Phase III: Take off Phase (2000 onwards)

### **Phase I: Warm-up Phase (1950s-1970s)**

The very initial phase of political relations was quite encouraging as it provided a solid foundation especially in the era of the right wing United National Party (UNP) during 1948-52, 1953-56, 1965-70, and 1977. The next democratic regime of the left-oriented Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) during 1956-59, 1960-65 and

1970-77 maintained the earlier paces.<sup>4</sup> During the first decade of political ties, lead was taken from Sri Lankan side as three Sri Lankan leaders visited Pakistan, however, none was reciprocated as Pakistan was going through a difficult phase of political transition amidst host of issues at domestic front. The chain of visits by political leadership continued from 1948 to 1985. Five Sri Lankan heads of state paid official visits to Pakistan, however, reciprocated by only two visits to Colombo by Pakistani leadership during the same period.<sup>5</sup> Both sides were having unanimity on bilateral relations, therefore, Pakistan's approach towards Sri Lanka had generally been supportive throughout the period.

### *Visit of General Sir John Kotelawala to Pakistan*

During his visit to Pakistan in 1953, General Sir John Kotelawala, the former Prime Minister of Ceylon, anticipated to seek bilateral agreement with Pakistan as a "hard bargaining and long drawn out talks," but it was sailed through otherwise.<sup>6</sup> He recounted that while having lunch with Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, settled the basis of our bilateral negotiations in one sentence. He told his Minister of Aviation, "Ceylon is our friend, Ceylon will not ask for anything unreasonable, give them whatever they want."

The initial phase of political relations touched the highest level of mutual understanding during the era of Sir John Kotelawala. During his visit to Pakistan in 1954, Sir John said, "we were so close to each other. We should know each other better and try to help each other."<sup>7</sup> In a farewell broadcast from Radio Pakistan, he said, "his visit had only too well convinced him how closely related our problems are and how similar is our outlook."<sup>8</sup>

Sri Lanka's fear was further accentuated by historical tradition of wars between South Indian invaders and Sinhalese kings. It was in the context of the Tamil problem that Sir John was reported as saying in 1954, "if we do not solve it now, I can visualise that in twenty years' time we will be sitting in Delhi as part of India."<sup>9</sup> It was the fear that led Sri Lanka to sign a defence treaty with Britain in November 1947, and Pakistan joined the Western-sponsored alliances of SEATO and CENTO. Together, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have never tried to forge a politico-strategic relationship against India.<sup>10</sup> The Sri Lankan foreign

policy always seeks to reduce Indian pressure by diplomacy and excludes the possibility of military confrontation with India under any circumstance.<sup>11</sup>

### ***President Ayub Khan's Visit to Colombo***

In the early 1960s, Pak-US relations suffered strain and a row appeared on account of provision of weapons and military equipment to India. That was the time, when Pakistan looked towards the Communist bloc in general and People's Republic of China in particular. Pakistan also made a serious attempt to establish a close relationship with smaller countries of the South Asia including Burma, Nepal and Sri Lanka. In this backdrop, President Ayub Khan got the credit of being the first Pakistani head of state to visit Colombo on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1963. On his arrival, he hoped that his visit would open new opportunities of collaboration and promote friendly and brotherly relations between the two countries.



President of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan visit to Sri Lanka

**Source:** Sri Lankan High Commission

In his banquet speech, he stressed that Pakistan was anxious to develop friendly ties with neighbouring countries on the basis of mutual respect for each other's right, sovereignty, dignity and territorial integrity. He made an emphatic plea for recognising China



as a forceful factor in human history and reaffirmed the need for a second Bandung conference. Referring to non-aligned countries, he said that Pakistan viewed with misgiving any move to convene international conference, which was based on the concept of a foreign policy detracting from the Afro-Asian solidarity. Welcoming the formation of the organisation of African Unity, he regretted that Asia had been unable to evolve a similar organisation to settle disputes such as the Kashmir issue. The question of the persons of Pakistani origin residing in Sri Lanka also came up for discussion during the visit. The joint communique illustrated that the issue was discussed between the two leaders and they expressed confidence that a speedy settlement could be arrived at on this matter in the mutual interest of both countries.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Kashmir Issue***

Initially, Sri Lanka adopted a neutral posture on the Kashmir issue. However, the joint communique issued during General Ayub Khan's visit to Sri Lanka in 1963 referred to the Kashmir question. It stated that "... they recalled with regret the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and agreed that its expeditious solution in accordance with the UN resolutions or by other peaceful means would be in the interest of peace in the subcontinent and in the region."<sup>13</sup> In order to maintain its neutrality and also to distance itself from the Indian stand on the issue, Colombo, on quite a few occasions, explained its position on Kashmir. In 1964, the Indian External Affairs Minister during a press conference in Colombo said, "India and Ceylon do not accept that there can be any referendum in Kashmir – an integral part of India." The Sri Lankan government immediately issued a clarification in which it stated that the question of Kashmir was "not raised in the discussion that took place in Ceylon with Sardar Swaran Singh." It added, "Ceylon's position on the question of the right of self-determination, which was discussed at these talks is that this right should extend only to nations and peoples as a whole and that the right of self-determination should apply only in relations to colonial territories under foreign domination." It also stated, "Ceylon's position with regard to Kashmir has always been that the dispute should be settled in accordance with the UN resolutions or by other peaceful means."<sup>14</sup>

### **1971 Indo-Pak Crisis**

Sri Lanka seriously monitored the Indo-Pak crisis of 1971 and had special concerns in East Pakistan. In February 1971, when Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike appealed to both India and Pakistan to resolve issues within the framework of diplomacy, especially the situation aggravated as a result of the hijacking of an Indian aircraft, Ganga, to Pakistan. She cautioned that tension at this stage could cause irreparable harm to all.<sup>15</sup> During the same month, when India withdrew landing and overflying rights for Pakistani planes, Sri Lanka extended these rights to PIA on Pakistan's request. The PIA made 103 technical landings (for refuelling) at Katunayake International Airport in the month of March 1971 and forty landings in April 1971.<sup>16</sup> Also in March 1971, sixteen East-bound and fifteen West-bound PAF planes landed at Katunayake.<sup>17</sup> The Sri Lankan Minister of Communications denied that Sri Lanka was involved in the transport of troops or arms from West Pakistan to East Pakistan.<sup>18</sup> In August 1971, Mrs. Bandaranaike reportedly wrote to General Yahya Khan, the then President of Pakistan offering her services to ease the tension between India and Pakistan.<sup>19</sup>

In December 1971, during Indo-Pak war, Sri Lanka observed strict neutrality, but urged the UN Secretary General to use his good offices to end the conflict.<sup>20</sup> It was reported that Mrs. Bandaranaike was also prepared to be associated with initiatives accepted by the UN towards achieving a settlement.<sup>21</sup> After the war, Pakistan welcomed any initiative that Sri Lanka might take regarding the release of the Pakistani PoWs from India. However, at the same time, General Yahya Khan expressed his scepticism about the success of such initiative, not only from Sri Lanka but also from other quarters, because India had linked up the PoWs issue with the recognition of Bangladesh.<sup>22</sup> Sri Lanka had recognised Bangladesh on 4 March 1972. Meanwhile, Colombo itself faced an insurgency in 1971.<sup>23</sup> On 23 April 1971, Mrs. Bandaranaike asked for military supplies from a number of countries to reinforce her small armed forces. In response, Sri Lanka received aid from the UK, the US, the USSR, Yugoslavia, Egypt, as well as India and Pakistan. According to Sri Lankan sources, they were supplied few helicopters, but no personnel.<sup>24</sup>

***Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike's Visit to Pakistan (4–10 September 1974)***

Mrs. Bandaranaike's week-long visit to Pakistan came against the backdrop of Sri Lanka's increasing tea exports to Pakistan, and India's May 1974 nuclear test-explosion. While, Pakistan openly condemned the Indian nuclear test, Sri Lanka reacted cautiously, accepting Indian Premier's assurances that the test was for peaceful purposes. However, the Sri Lankan Deputy Foreign Minister, Lakshman Jayakody, announced that if India used its nuclear potential to advance its weaponry, Sri Lanka would be totally opposed to it and will have to protest.<sup>25</sup> Speaking at a banquet in Islamabad, Mrs. Bandaranaike referred to very strong bonds of friendship between Sri Lanka and Pakistan and assured that her country would honestly endeavour to strengthen these ties. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, while appreciating Sri Lanka's truly independent policy, said that people of Pakistan were aware of the difficulties that a relatively small country faces in pursuing a principled policy.<sup>26</sup>

The two Premiers addressed the joint session of the Pakistan Parliament on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1974. Mr. Bhutto in his speech said that both countries were committed to international peace and security and to the right of small states to live in freedom from fear. All states can claim to be peace loving, but the claim was valid only for states, which encouraged specific settlement of disputes on the basis of justice and worked actively to remove the shadow of the nuclear threat that darkens mankind's horizon.<sup>27</sup>

In her address, Mrs. Bandaranaike said that we shared a common interest in securing that our region did not become an area of competition and confrontation by great and superpowers. Later in Karachi, she said, "Sri Lanka's foreign policy aspirations are fulfilled in their totality in its relations with Pakistan."<sup>28</sup> Describing her talks with the Pakistani counterpart as cordial and frank, she said that "we found ourselves in agreement on fundamentals," which included the proposal of the IOZP, the Middle East question and the situation faced by the two countries following the oil crisis. In the joint communique, the two Prime Ministers reaffirmed their resolute adherence to the principles enshrined in the UN charter, and stressed that all states must

scrupulously refrain from interference in one another's internal affairs and from the threat or use of force in the settlement of disputes.

On Sri Lanka's proposal for the establishment of the IOZP, free from great powers' rivalry, tension and military escalation, they expressed gratifications over the progress so far achieved. They noted that all littoral and hinterland states should coordinate their efforts to realise their commitment to a policy of denuclearisation, which would entail the permanent renunciation of a nuclear weapon option and the denial of the use of their territories, territorial waters and airspace to nuclear weapons of other states. In this context, the Prime Minister of Pakistan told the Sri Lankan leader that Pakistan had decided to take initiative for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in South Asia, at the forthcoming UN General Assembly session.<sup>29</sup>

The two Premiers reviewed the international political economic situation and noted that despite some favourable development, a number of old and new problems clouded the prospects of establishing an equitable world order and durable peace. They agreed that all nations, small or large, had rights as well as duty to contribute towards the achievement of just and lasting peace, which was a prerequisite for the realisation of the hopes and aspirations of the people of the developing countries for a better life.

Expressing their solidarity with the people of the Third World, still struggling against oppression and exploitation, the two Prime Ministers condemned the attempts of colonial and racist regimes to impede the process of decolonisation. Sri Lanka and Pakistan reiterated their resolve to give full support to the struggle of people in Africa and elsewhere to eradicate racism and colonialism. The two sides reviewed the developments in relation amongst the countries of the South Asian region. The visiting dignitary apprised Mr. Bhutto about the agreement reached between her country and India over the outstanding differences. The Prime Minister of Pakistan complimented the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka on the success of her policies.

Both dignitaries reviewed the progress made in the development of bilateral relations in various fields. They agreed that bilateral consultations between the officials of the two countries be held periodically. The two Prime Ministers expressed deep satisfaction

over manifold expansion of trade between the two countries and the conclusion of a Cultural Agreement in 1973. The exhibition of Gandhara Art in Sri Lanka and visit of a Sri Lankan cultural troupe to Pakistan had enhanced mutual good will and understanding between the two nations.

Both leaders expressed deep satisfaction over the manifold expansion of trade between the two countries and agreed that happy trends should be consolidated and strengthened. Towards this end and to promote cooperation between the two countries in the field of economic development, both Prime Ministers decided to establish a Pakistan-Sri Lanka Joint Economic Committee which would meet periodically. During this visit, the citizens of Lahore accorded a civic reception in her honour at the historic Shalimar Garden. She also visited Islamabad, the Buddhist Museum at Taxila and Turbela Dam. Everywhere, the dignitaries were accorded enthusiastic welcome by people from all walks of life, reflecting the strong bonds of friendship between the two nations.

***Prime Minister Bhutto's Visit to Sri Lanka (14–19 December 1975)***

After a year-plus (15 months) of Mrs. Bandaranaike's visit to Pakistan, Mr. Bhutto visited Sri Lanka in December 1975. A number of official-level meetings took place between the two countries in wake of this visit.<sup>30</sup> During this visit, the two Prime Ministers had comprehensive session on issues of bilateral interest. The talks were characterised by warmth and cordiality symbolising the mutual understanding, friendship and goodwill that exist between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Both dignitaries noted with satisfaction the important strides made by the two countries in the economic, commercial and cultural spheres. They identified new areas for cooperation and affirmed the value of regular consultation for their mutually beneficial contacts. They reviewed progress made by the Sri Lanka-Pakistan Joint Economic Cooperation Committee and appreciated the increased volume of trade between the two countries. Recognising the potential for even greater trade between the two countries, they agreed to accord priority to its further expansion. It was agreed that steps appropriate to achieve this objective would be undertaken by both governments.



Prime Minister of Pakistan, Z.A. Bhutto visit to Sri Lanka

**Source:** <http://sirimavobandaranaike.org/16-december-1975-visit-of-pakistani-president-zulfikar-ali-bhutto/>

The Prime Minister of Pakistan expressed his conviction that in view of wide consumer preference enjoyed by Sri Lankan tea, Pakistan will continue to buy it in huge quantity. In return, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka noted that her country was a large importer of a number of commodities from Pakistan and hoped that it would continue to be so in the future also. The two leaders felt the need for diversifying bilateral trade. In this connection, the Prime Minister of Pakistan agreed to offer deferred payment facilities to Sri Lanka for import of such manufactured goods from Pakistan as would be mutually agreed upon, at competitive prices. Both dignitaries expressed satisfaction at the progress made by the two countries in the field of technical cooperation. They expressed confidence that there were many areas in which such cooperation could be extended to mutual benefit of the two nations such as development of water resources, animal husbandry, germinology, shipping and tourism. The dignitaries agreed that the cultural exchanges under the Sri Lanka-Pakistan Cultural Agreement should continue to be stimulated in order to enrich understanding and deepen the existing bonds of friendship between Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Initiative taken by the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka during her visit to Pakistan in 1974 on the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as

a zone of peace, was also carried forward by both sides. In June 1975, Pakistan supported the call for a regional conference aimed at discussing the establishment of the IOZP, and also suggested Sri Lanka as the venue. In July 1975, talks were held between the Sri Lankan Defence and Foreign Affairs' Secretary, W.T. Jayasinghe, and the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Agha Shahi. These talks helped in bringing closer the concept of IOZP and NWFZ. Mr. Bhutto reaffirmed Pakistan's support from every constructive effort to eliminate the rivalry of the great powers from the Indian Ocean. The political leadership agreed that a meaningful concept of the IOZP must be supplemented by a commitment by the littoral and hinterland states towards a system of universal collective security including renunciation of the nuclear weapons option. In this context, both sides emphasised the creation of NWFZ in the South Asian and Middle Eastern regions as complementary to the concept. The joint communique issued at the conclusion of the Pakistan Prime Minister's visit was phrased in similar terms.<sup>31</sup>

Addressing the Sri Lankan Parliament, Mr. Bhutto declared, “we reject hegemony or dominance. Our desire for peaceful coexistence in the region is based on the principle of sovereign equality.”<sup>32</sup> At the meeting between the two Premiers, Pakistan's consistent and concerted efforts to normalise relations with the countries of the region figured prominently especially after 1972 onwards. Mrs. Bandaranaike spoke of the readiness to promote harmony in South Asia and sought more cooperation with Pakistan at international forums, because of the identical posture towards global issues.<sup>33</sup>

Speaking at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, the Prime Minister Bhutto suggested the creation of a legal and political regime for the Indian Ocean under a four-point code of conduct. Firstly, the countries of the region must commit themselves to conduct their mutual relations on the basis of the UN Charter, especially those concerning sovereign equality of states, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence and non-interference in their internal affairs. Secondly, procedure and machinery should be created to secure compliance with the decisions of the UN on the disputes and conflicts in the region, and all regional powers, big or small, should be associated with the process of peace-making. Thirdly, the major

littoral states of the Indian Ocean should seek agreement for the maintenance of a reasonable ratio in their naval and military forces. Finally, an Indian Ocean regime must include verifiable commitment on the part of regional states not to develop or introduce nuclear weapons into the region.<sup>34</sup>

Mr. Bhutto also declared that Pakistan fully shared the desire of the South Asian states not to become embroiled in the rivalry of the Great Powers and emphasised that states of the region would not be able to resist involvement unless they set their own house in order first. Referring to wars of national liberation against imperialism and colonialism, he said that these wars needed to be distinguished from wars of secession fermented by forces of subversion and aggression. On the Kashmir issue, he said that after sufficient progress in the implementation of the 1972 Simla Agreement had been made, the time would be ripe for moving towards negotiating an equitable settlement of the issue. Later talking to the Sri Lankan Muslim community, he advised them to extend full cooperation to the government.

Prime Minister Bhutto had also sought Sri Lanka's support for his idea of a Third World Summit. In September 1976, the Sri Lankan Deputy Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs said that his country deliberated upon Pakistan's call for a conference of the Third World countries. In October 1976, the Sri Lankan High Commissioner in Pakistan stated that Pakistan's call for a Third World Economic Summit would carry Colombo Summit's call (1974) for a new economic order, to a higher level.<sup>35</sup> In February 1977, the Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Jayasinghe, during his two-day visit to Islamabad, told newsmen that the Third World Summit proposal required a lot of preparations.

Coincidentally, in 1977, there was a political change in three prominent countries of the South Asia, i.e., Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka, as governments with outlook of right-wing gained power. Since then Islamabad and Colombo had further solidified their bilateral ties on political and economic spheres.<sup>36</sup> The two nations also developed identical views on regional and global politics. In 1978, during Sri Lanka's chairmanship of the NAM, Pakistan was granted the guest status at the Belgrade Foreign Ministers Conference. In September 1979, Pakistan was extended membership of the NAM.



In December 1979, when non-aligned Afghanistan was invaded by Soviet forces, Sri Lanka condemned the Soviet invasion. On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1980, the Sri Lankan cabinet called on Moscow to withdraw its military contingents from Afghanistan immediately. Sri Lanka also supported the UN General Assembly's resolution, which deplored the Soviet intervention and called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from that non-aligned country. Pakistan was among the 24 non-aligned countries that sponsored the move; India abstained from voting.<sup>37</sup> Sri Lanka also supported the subsequent General Assembly resolutions on the subject matter.

## **Phase II: Pre-Take-off Phase (1980s-1990s)**

### ***Enhanced Defence Cooperation***

Exchange of delegations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, especially military officials, increased since late 1970s. In March 1977, the Commander of the Sri Lankan Army, Lieutenant General D.S. Attygalle visited Pakistan. In May 1978, an eight-member Pakistan National Defence College team paid a five-day goodwill visit to Sri Lanka. A year later, in May 1979, Air Chief Marshal W.D.H. Goonetilleke visited Pakistan, followed by PAF Chief, Air Marshal Anwar Shamim's visit to Colombo in September 1979. The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, S. Hameed, visited Islamabad twice in May 1981 and April 1984.<sup>38</sup> These visits were paid in the context of 1983 riots in Sri Lanka. The United News of India carried out a report from Colombo, which stated that "riot-battered Sri Lanka had appealed for pledges of military assistance from the US, Britain, Pakistan and Bangladesh, in case of foreign attack."<sup>39</sup> Though, the report said that Pakistan and Bangladesh responded positively, both countries denied that they had even received any request from Sri Lanka.

Since 1981, Pakistan and Sri Lanka along with Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal have been participating in the meetings of the SAARC. While, Pakistan shared with India certain initial reservations concerning the SAARC;<sup>40</sup> with smaller countries of the region, it shared a major concern viz India's dominance.<sup>41</sup>

### ***President Jayewardene's Visit to Pakistan***

President Jayewardene paid a week-long state visit to Pakistan. During their talks and in their banquet speeches, President Jayewardene

and General Zia-ul-Haq, the then President of Pakistan, reiterated their commitment to the principle of non-interference and sovereign equality. President Jayewardene said that Sri Lanka and Pakistan had similar problems and also shared similar perceptions on a number of matters. He said that both countries cooperated closely in the past and would continue to do so in the future. He also thanked Pakistan for its support to Sri Lanka's sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>42</sup> General Zia recalled the support given by Sri Lanka at the time of Pakistan's entry into the NAM as well as to Pakistan's proposal for the establishment of NWF.

The Sri Lankan President also addressed Afghan refugees at the Jallozai tentage village. He said that his country had always vocally objected to the invasion of Afghanistan by foreign power. He stressed that smaller nations must be free from bullying by the bigger nations. He also said that violence was the major cause of the emergence of refugee problem and mentioned that because of terrorist activities in Sri Lanka, some of its citizens had to take refuge in the Southern India. He expressed the hope that Afghan refugees would ultimately be able to return to their homeland in freedom and independence.<sup>43</sup> The joint communique, in this connection, stated that President Jayewardene commended the efforts of the Government and people of Pakistan for providing humanitarian relief to three million Afghan refugees and that the two leaders agreed that the UN Secretary General should be given every encouragement and support for the political solution of the problem.

In the context of terrorism and the Tamil issue, Sri Lankan President said that terrorism coupled with non-cooperative attitude of a section of Tamil community had made search for a political solution of the Tamil problem difficult. President Jayewardene explained the developments with regard to ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, particularly the escalation of terrorist activities. He mentioned about the initiatives taken by the Government of Sri Lanka to achieve a political settlement within the framework of a unitary Sri Lanka, the course of the All Parties Conference and its outcome. President Jayewardene reiterated that the terrorist violence had first to be eradicated before any meaningful progress could be made in this direction.

President Zia reaffirmed Pakistan's firm support to Sri Lanka's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and hoped that the initiative taken by the Sri Lankan Government would lead to a political settlement within the framework of a unitary Sri Lanka. In this context, he stated that Pakistan has condemned terrorism in any of its form. The two Presidents called upon international community to take solid measures to combat terrorism, which had become a menace to civilised society.<sup>44</sup> They also informed each other about positive developments in their respective relations with India. Concerning regional cooperation, Sri Lankan President was of the view that South Asia and Southeast Asia should join together to harness their resources in various fields for the welfare of their people. The Sri Lankan President said that his country looked forward to Pakistan's continued cooperation and wise counsel in the SAARC summit.<sup>45</sup>

After President Jayewardene's visit, a crisis developed in the SAARC, when Sri Lanka refused to attend its meeting in Bhutan (Thimphu), because of the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs' statement on the Tamil issue. It was through Pakistan's timely mediation that Sri Lanka ultimately participated in the conference.<sup>46</sup> The incident clearly showed that the SAARC could not remain indifferent to unresolved political issues as they could hamper its progress and may even affect its very existence.

The two Presidents expressed satisfaction over the progress towards regional cooperation among the countries of South Asia. They agreed that it would make a significant contribution to the welfare of the people of participating countries and improve the quality of their life. They emphasised that respect for the principles of sovereign equity, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs of the states and mutual benefit was indispensable for the promotion of mutual interest and confidence, and realisation of understanding, amity and cooperation in the region.

They also reviewed the steady development of relations between the two countries in the economic, commercial and other fields. They agreed that the Joint Committee for Economic Cooperation had been making a valuable contribution to the growth of bilateral relations and expressed their full support for the implementation

of the proposals of this committee. They agreed further, that a high-level delegation from Pakistan would visit Sri Lanka in pursuance to the proposals discussed at the meeting for the further expansion of bilateral relations in the trade, economic and cultural fields.

President Jayewardene visited several places in Pakistan including Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi and the archaeological sites of Taxila and Mohenjo-Daro. At Lahore, he attended a civic reception. Everywhere, he was accorded a warm and enthusiastic welcome.

### ***General Zia-ul-Haq's Visit to Sri Lanka***

The history of Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations is full of cherished and memorable moments. Some of these moments hold great significance for both countries. One such moment was the visit of the President of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq to Colombo in 1986. Before concluding his visit, General Zia held a final press conference in Colombo. During the press conference, an Indian newspaper editor asked him, "Your Excellency, is it true that you are giving weapons to Sri Lanka?" and he replied, "Weapons! Weapons! If Sri Lanka only asks I will give them anything!"<sup>247</sup> The press conference ended before its scheduled time. The statement of General Zia, therefore, proved the highest degree of intimacy of the relationship that both countries enjoyed.



Pakistan President General Zia-ul-Haq in Colombo on State visit

**Source:** Sri Lankan High Commission

During this visit, on the request of Sri Lankan Army Chief, General Zia approved every possible assistance to the Sri Lankan

Army with regard to their professional training and capacity building. In this regard, a number of army courses were increased to train junior leaders and non-commissioned officers in Sri Lanka by the Pakistan Army instructors. These trained junior leaders, subsequently, took part in the Vadamarachchi Operation (1987) to recapture the territory of Vadamarachchi in the Jaffna Peninsula from the LTTE.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, a number of facilities were built in various Pakistan Army schools of instructions to accommodate Sri Lankan young officers and impart training. A batch of two hundred National Cadet Corps junior leaders were also trained in Shinkiari. These arrangements, thus, boosted the professional competence of the Sri Lankan Army to negotiate LTTE terrorist activities.

### **Phase III: Take-off Phase (2000 onwards)**

The third phase of Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations is the manifestation of maturity of relations between the two states since the earlier two phases provided sufficient base for the consolidation of ties. This phase provided afresh confidence to the leadership of both sides to move forward on the common goals at bilateral levels.

#### ***Visit of President Rajapaksa to Pakistan***

President of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa, accompanied by Madam Shiranthi Rajapaksa, seven Ministers and two Deputy Ministers paid a State Visit to Pakistan from 31<sup>st</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2006, on the invitation of General Pervez Musharraf, the then President of Pakistan. President Rajapaksa held official talks with President Musharraf at the Aiwan-e-Sadr (Presidency), Pakistan. He also met Mr. Shaukat Aziz, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan. During this visit, wide-ranging discussions in areas of mutual interest were held. Both sides underscored the importance attached to the special bonds of affinity that existed between the two countries. Both leaders agreed to hold frequent summit-level meetings, promote parliamentary exchanges and enhance the process of consultations, cooperation and coordination between their respective institutions.

During this visit, the bilateral FTA took up the shape that covered trade in goods as well as trade in services. President Rajapaksa met the members of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Islamabad. Pakistani businessmen were invited to invest in Sri Lanka. He also addressed a forum of Pakistan and Sri Lankan business

leaders in Karachi on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2006. The two sides agreed to create an enabling environment to facilitate and provide incentives to their private sectors to develop mutually-beneficial projects of cooperation and joint ventures. They expressed their complete satisfaction on the outcome of the visit, which constituted another milestone in the joint endeavours of the two countries to take Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations to new heights.



Sri Lankan President with General Pervez Musharraf

**Source:** Sri Lankan High Commission

### *President Maithripala Sirisena visit to Pakistan*

The Sri Lankan President, Maithripala Sirisena paid a State Visit to Pakistan in April 2015. This was the first visit by President Sirisena to Pakistan since his election in January 2015. During this visit, President Sirisena and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, held bilateral talks. The Sri Lankan President also met with the President of Pakistan, Mamnoon Hussain and attended a State Banquet. As a symbol to mark the State Visit, President Sirisena was accorded the honour of planting a sapling of a tree at the Shakarparian Plantation Site, Islamabad. He also visited the Taxila Museum, which houses a relic of the Buddha as well as ancient Gandhara heritage artefacts.

The Pakistani leadership was briefed on some of the recent developments in Sri Lanka, particularly on the progress of the 100-day Programme, which commits Sri Lanka on a path to strengthen democracy, independence of the judiciary, respect for the rule of law and ensuring that all communities in Sri Lanka enjoy the dividend of peace, which has dawned in the country.

During wide-ranging discussions, the two leaders reviewed the political, economic, cultural, education, consular, legal, defence and other spheres of engagement. They also shared views on ways and means to further strengthening the robust relations between the two countries. President Sirisena conveyed the cordial greetings and good wishes of Sri Lankans to the friendly people of Pakistan. He emphasised on the need to build upon the longstanding connections between the two nations, which span thousands of years and which has progressively achieved a unique robustness in the post-independence era emerging from the time of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. They agreed on the immense value of bilateral interaction through high-level visits as well as ministerial and official level engagements.



Sri Lankan President with Prime Minister of Pakistan

**Source:** <http://www.president.gov.lk/president-sirisenas-visit-testifies-to-strong-bonds-between-lanka-pakistan-nawaz-sharif/>

The two leaders also discussed matters of mutual interest in regional and international fora including SAARC. The need for new initiatives in technological cooperation in the region was emphasised in order to achieve greater competitiveness in the global arena. The two leaders valued the ongoing process of coordinating positions at international bodies such as the UN including the UNHRC and supporting each other's candidatures. President Sirisena also conveyed gratitude for the facilities and training provided to Sri Lankan Armed Forces personnel as well as the continuing support in the post-conflict development phase such as the grant of US \$ 1 million for IDPs' housing, which supports the resettlement programme in Sri Lanka.

On the economic front, the two leaders concurred that the full economic potential in the economic relationship is yet to be fully realised. It was agreed to progress with renewed efforts to further enhance economic cooperation within the existing mechanisms of the JEC and the Working Groups on Trade in Goods, Investment, Auto Sector and Customs Cooperation. President Sirisena invited Pakistan's investment to Sri Lanka particularly in the sectors of pharmaceuticals and medical devices, cement, sugar, IT and tourism. As an immediate step, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif agreed to send an Investment Team to explore opportunities in the pharmaceuticals, cement and sugar sectors. President Sirisena extended his gratitude on Pakistan's US \$ 200 million credit-line offered to Sri Lanka. Official-level engagement was tasked to make further progress and finalise arrangements for disbursements.

On 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Pakistan and Sri Lanka inked an agreement for cooperation in the civil nuclear energy sector. Sri Lanka is the first country in the region to enter into such an agreement with Pakistan. The agreement was signed in the presence of the visiting Sri Lankan President, Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at Islamabad. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, at this historic moment of bilateral relationship, expressed that the talks were marked by full trust and complete understanding as both sides reached a broad consensus on the ways and means to strengthen bilateral cooperation in a comprehensive manner. The Sri Lankan President Sirisena said that the two countries were charting a dynamic course in relations.

During this visit, the high-level of cooperation in the field of education was also noted by the two leaders. President Sirisena conveyed appreciation for the large number of scholarships and placements provided for MBBS, Engineering, Dental Science and Diplomacy programmes under the Pakistan Technical Assistance and other programmes. Pakistani students were offered Presidential scholarship from Sri Lanka. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also offered the expertise and services of the National Data Base and Registration Authority (NADRA) of Pakistan mainly to revise the identity card system in Sri Lanka.

Referring to the high frequency of air connectivity existing between Sri Lanka and Pakistan, President Sirisena invited PIA to



recommence flights to Sri Lanka to further bolster aviation links between the two countries. Such a measure, he said, would give an impetus to enhance trade and economic relations, tourism and P2P contact. President Sirisena proposed the establishment of a Joint Research and Awareness Programme, which would generate wider appreciation of the ancient connections, encourage tourism and intensify P2P contact.

The two leaders witnessed the signature of six instruments, which provide an additional framework to intensify cooperation in the fields of disaster management, sports, shipping, cooperation between the atomic energy agencies, anti-narcotics and academic cooperation between NDU and the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKIIRSS). The visit of President Sirisena generated a new momentum towards charting a more dynamic course in the relations between two countries. He extended an invitation to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to undertake a visit to Sri Lanka with a view to continue the bilateral dialogue and further cement the strong friendship shared by the two countries.<sup>49</sup>

### ***Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Visit to Colombo***

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, paid a reciprocal visit to Colombo on the invitation extended by the Sri Lankan President, Maithripala Sirisena. The delegation included the Commerce Minister, the Minister for Defence Production, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and National Security Advisor. During his stay in Colombo, the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif held the bilateral and delegation-level talks with the Sri Lankan President, Prime Minister and cabinet ministers.

The two countries signed several agreements and MoUs in the areas of health, science and technology, trade, statistics, gem and jewellery, money laundering, terrorism financing, and culture. It was also decided to launch the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Strategic Dialogue and establishment of the Joint Working Groups on Cooperation in the fields of Economic Cooperation, Higher Education, Science and Technology, Health and Tourism. Moreover, Sri Lanka requested PILDAT training for the members of Sri Lankan Parliament. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka also offered dairy farms of the National Livestock Development Board (NLDB) to Pakistani investors

on public-private partnership basis, which was reviewed by the concerned organisation under the Ministry of Defence, Pakistan to be implemented. The Sri Lankan Health Ministry also requested to enhance Pakistani exports of pharmaceuticals. In this regard, it was suggested to send a team of importers to Pakistan for further progress. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif delivered a special lecture to the Parliamentarians, Ministers and members of Diplomatic Corps at LKIIRSS. He also visited the sacred Temple of the Tooth Relic, International Buddhist Museum and Jinnah Hall in the historic city of Kandy.

Keeping the vast trade opportunities available to both countries, the quantum of mutual trade was decided to bring at a level of US \$ 1 billion. In order to facilitate the implementation on MoUs signed by both countries, Pakistan has offered to set up cement and sugar plants in Sri Lanka on mutually agreed terms for the long-term benefit of the Sri Lankan economy. Furthermore, the two sides also agreed to build up regular liaison channels, and set up a Pakistan-Sri Lanka Joint Committee on Agricultural Cooperation that shall be responsible for planning and implementing the joint projects. In order to promote and rehabilitate agrarian community of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, the Government of Pakistan through its High Commission in Sri Lanka handed over a made in Pakistan Tractor



Pakistan reaches out to rehabilitate Agrarian community in Eastern Sri Lanka

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

to the Palayativadai Farmers Association, Puttovil. While speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister Eastern Province, Z.A. Nazeer Ahamed said that this would help the poor farmers of the area to start work on paddy fields again.<sup>50</sup> Pakistan's contribution to several projects in Sri Lanka reflects the desire of the people and Government of Pakistan to assist people at the grass root level in Sri Lanka.

In order to add more substance to economic cooperation between Pakistan and Sri Lanka and to get maximum benefits from each other's strengths, Pakistan has successfully organised two Single Country Exhibitions in 2016 and 2017 in Colombo. The aim is to provide a platform to the Pakistan based companies, for showcasing their range of products and services to the Sri Lankan consumers and business community. These exhibitions provide an opportunity to explore the Pakistani market in Sri Lanka and to promote Pakistan–Sri Lanka economic relations by diversifying the existing trade patterns.



Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurating First Pakistan Single Country Exhibition in Sri Lanka

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

In fact, the process of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Sri Lanka is greatly assisted by increased interaction between people and the government functionaries at both sides. Pakistan is engaged in Sri Lanka's social sector development process and same gesture is being reciprocated by Sri Lanka. Some of the projects being sponsored include construction of schools, hospitals, houses

for IDPs, clean drinking water supply projects, livelihood generation, setting up computer training centres, upgrading health in rural areas and providing scholarships to needy children.



Inauguration of Second Pakistan Single Country Exhibition in Sri Lanka

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

### **Pakistan–Sri Lanka Efforts to Combat Terrorism**

The Sri Lankan Model to combat terrorism is quite pertinent in the contemporary era. Pakistan's support to Sri Lanka in this regard is greatly appreciated by the masses at both sides. Though, in year 2009, the menace of terrorism was fully eradicated by rooting out the basis of the LTTE; it took almost three decades being the longest account of militancy. The world, prominently the European Union and Canada also joined hands in naming the LTTE a terrorist organisation, hence, paving way to block its financial support from the external elements.

The Sri Lankan government attempted to normalise the situation through peaceful means in 1985, but talks with the LTTE could not achieve desired results. In 1994, when President Chandrika Kumaratunga assumed her office, she resumed the peace talks with the LTTE, but again this peace initiative could not last long. In 2002, the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE signed a Norwegian-mediated ceasefire agreement, however, in 2003, Tamil Tigers pulled themselves out of peace talks, but the ceasefire continued.

In May 2009, the Sri Lankan government announced that the Tamil Tigers had been crushed after a massive armed forces campaign in the region of upper East. The Sri Lankan government did all what

it could and brought the country to normalcy. One thing, which was noticeable and appreciable, is that the Sri Lankan government did not stop their democratic process during the turmoil and election campaigns continued despite the severity of the conflict.

Pakistan also opted for military operations against terrorism and achieved considerable success through continuous hard work and sacrifices. In Sri Lanka, the rebels fought war for a separate homeland, whereas, in Pakistan, terrorists used religion to create turbulence and to gain their ulterior motives. However, the bombing strategy of both terrorists in Pakistan and the LTTE remained same. The military operations conducted by Pakistan are Operation Rah-e-Haq (2007), Operation Rah-e-Haq II (2008), Operation Sarat-e-Mustakeem (2008), Operation Rah-e-Haq III (2009), Operation Rah-e-Rasht (2009), Operation Rah-e-Nijat (2009) and an ongoing Operation Zarb-e-Azb (2014). The motive behind these operations were to get rid of all non-state actors, who had been exploiting people in the pretext of religion and bringing socio-economic ills to Pakistan. The rational thinking of both political and military leadership, in line with the Sri Lankan model, paid the dividends as Pakistan has successfully curbed the menace of extremism by nabbing the militants.

It was evident that the LTTE issue was resolved through the collective effort of the Sri Lankan people and their political and military leadership. The same resolve is seen in curbing the menace of terrorism in Pakistan. Undoubtedly, the Pakistan Armed Forces have successfully broken the backbone and organised capability of terrorists at home. Terrorists have met serious setbacks in the Operation Zarb-e-Azb and are now creating pressure on the Pakistan government with external agents. However, the positive effects of this ongoing operation are quite visible in the society. People of Pakistan are determined to root out terrorism from Pakistan once and for all. In addition, the zeal and enthusiasm shown by the Pakistan Armed Forces is incredible and the internal security situation of Pakistan has improved.

Another similarity between the two states can also be drawn out of their rehabilitation process in war torn areas. In Sri Lanka, a three-pronged strategy was adopted for the rehabilitation process,

i.e., domestic (state machinery), regional (neighbouring states and regional organisations) and international (UN and NGOs). Whereas, in Pakistan, North Waziristan Agency is the largest tribal agency with difficult and complicated topography. But, by sacrificing their own lives, Armed Forces successfully cleared the region. IDPs have returned to their homes after installing administrative setup. The counterterrorism strategy of the Pakistan Army has been applauded worldwide and Sri Lankan moral support is undoubtedly a stimulus for its execution.



Quick Impact Projects in FATA Areas, Pakistan

Source: Pakistan Army

## **Military Relationship**

Since the collaboration has been getting thicker and more reflective in the military relationship of the two countries, Sri Lankan demands and needs regarding increase of vacancies for officers or cadets training is always accorded priority. In this regard, a number of Sri Lankan Army officers have graduated from the NDU, Islamabad, Command and Staff College, Quetta, and Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul. Besides regular training, short duration courses are also offered to Sri Lankan military personnel. In 2015, the Directing Staff Exchange Programme was also initiated to enhance the interaction of both armed forces. Sri Lanka is a regular participant of various Army and Naval exercises, competitions and Defence Exhibitions organised in Pakistan from time-to-time. Pakistan and Sri Lanka hold the Staff Talks at Joint

Services level and share their experiences in modern warfare. The military leaders of both sides also pay visits to each other on a regular basis to strengthen the existing relationship between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



Pakistan's COAS General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani visit to Sri Lanka

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo



Pakistan's COAS General Raheel Sharif visit to Sri Lanka

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

During the 2004 Tsunami in Sri Lanka, Pakistan was one of the first countries to reach Sri Lanka with relief assistance. The Pakistan Navy Task Group comprising ships MOAWIN and KHAIBAR with embarked helicopter undertook rescue and relief operations in Colombo and Galle. Pakistan also extended its full support in

form of relief goods, when the Western part of Sri Lanka hit with floods and also to mitigate drought conditions in Sri Lanka. There is immense goodwill in Pakistan for Sri Lankan people and their wellbeing. Pakistan played a key role in thwarting efforts of the Western countries to table a resolution against Sri Lanka at the 18<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council in Geneva in September 2011. In fact, Pakistan is fully cognizant of Sri Lankan needs and always provides military assistance and equipment without any formality; extending the friendly and caring gesture in the context of capacity building of the Sri Lankan Army. Today, Sri Lanka is one of the largest importers of Pakistan defence products.



Pakistan's Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman visit to Sri Lanka

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

## **Conclusion**

The history of bilateral relations between the two countries reveal that Pakistan-Sri Lanka bondage of relationship intrinsically founded in the whims and wishes of people and leadership of both sides and explicitly manifested on occasions of joint concern at regional and global developments and consequent happenings. Sri Lanka despite having major stakes in India vis-a-vis Pakistan, yet it positively reciprocated Pakistan's goodwill gestures on all critical moments of the history. This relationship, though stemmed partly from their common perception of threat from India, has never been directed against it, strategically or politically.



The fact is that the South Asian countries have differences, yet for various reasons cannot unite on one platform to vent them. This gives a pretext to the superpowers intervening in the politics of this region, which further complicates the situation. A realistic solution, therefore, ought to be found out for this peculiar dilemma. To this end, it has got to make serious efforts at solving outstanding issues in a just and a peaceful manner. The smaller countries of South Asia, on their part, should pay more attention towards keeping their own affairs in order by building sound political structures and solid economic basis, and by adopting progressive approaches in their foreign policy options.

By doing so, they could enlarge their area of cooperation with India, and may be able to check its hegemony, with greater moral and political strength. The economic and technical ties among the smaller countries of the region should be strengthened in the immediate future; this particularly applies to Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations. The relations can also be fostered on strong mutual Sino-Pakistan and Sino-Sri Lankan relationship, as China maintains strong mutual interest in the economic and military development of Sri Lanka and Pakistan. It is highly envisaged that the process of long-lasting friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will continue to attain new heights in the future.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, first Governor General of Pakistan, in a broadcast talk to the people of the USA in February 1948. Retrieved from <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/content.php?pageID=Foreign%20Policy>.

<sup>2</sup> Article 40 of the Constitution of Pakistan. Retrieved from <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/content.php?pageID=Foreign%20Policy>.

<sup>3</sup> MoFA, retrieved from <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/content>.

<sup>4</sup> Sabiha Hasan, "Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Second Quarter 1985), pp. 104-128.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> He visited in the Capacity of Minister of Works and Transport. (105) *Dawn*, 12 January 1954.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 15 January 1954.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 16 January 1954.

<sup>9</sup> *Times of India* (New Delhi), 1 October 1954.

<sup>10</sup> According to an Indian author, Pakistan's location on the northwest frontier and Sri Lanka's position on the southern flank of India opens up the possibility of constraining India in a pincer movement. See Nandhini Iyer, "Pakistan and Sri Lanka: The Dynamics of Distant Cordiality", in Surendra Chopra, ed. *Perspective on Pakistan's Foreign Policy* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev. University, 1983), p. 442.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 445.

<sup>12</sup> Sabiha Hasan, "Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Second Quarter 1985), pp. 104-128.

<sup>13</sup> Joint Communiqués, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>14</sup> *The Pakistan Times* (Lahore), 21 September 1964.

<sup>15</sup> *Morning News* (Karachi), 24 February 1971.

<sup>16</sup> A Jeyaratnam Wilson, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p 110.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> *Ceylon Daily News*. 24 August 1971, cited in ibid. p. 256.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Interview to Times of Ceylon, in Dawn, 9 February 1973. See also, for instance, statement by the Pakistan Charge d'Affaires in Sri Lanka at a press conference in Colombo: "He appealed to the world opinion, particularly the people of Sri Lanka, who are well known for their compassion and human kindness under the teachings of Lord Buddha, to persuade India to release Pakistani POWs". *Morning News*. 2 December 1972.

<sup>23</sup> See Rukhsana A. Siddiqui, "Ethnic Strife in Sri Lanka and the 1971 Insurrection", *Regional Studies* (Islamabad), III: 2 (Spring 1985), pp. 63-78.

<sup>24</sup> Keesings Contemporary Archives, 1971-72. p. 111.

<sup>25</sup> *Morning News*, 5 September 1974.

<sup>26</sup> *Dawn*, 5 September 1974.

<sup>27</sup> *Morning News*, 6 September 1974.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> For example, in January 1975 a six-member Sri Lanka parliamentary delegation visited Pakistan; in February Pakistan-Sri Lanka Joint Committee for economic cooperation held its first session; and in April Sri Lanka's Deputy Speaker visited Pakistan.

<sup>31</sup> Joint Communiques January, 1975 - December, 1975 (Islamabad: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, 1976), pp. 33-34.

<sup>32</sup> *Morning News*, 17 December 1975.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 December 1975. p 114.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Dawn*. 9 October 1976.

<sup>36</sup> These include liberalisation of economy and some constitutional changes. Pakistan also sent Justice (Retd.) Hamoodur Rehmen (President's Advisor on Constitutional Affairs) to Sri Lanka in August 1979 for the study of proportional representation electoral system introduced in Sri Lanka for the first time in local government elections in May 1978.

<sup>37</sup> The resolution received 104 votes in favour, with 18 against and 18 abstentions. It is said that Indian move to table a parallel resolution which sought to justify the Soviet invasion, fizzled out as Pakistan's Ambassador Naik and other sponsors actively worked on Sri Lanka, Algeria and Madagascar. See *Dawn*, 16 January 1980.

<sup>38</sup> Rafiq\* Akhtar, ed.. *Pakistan Year Book 1984-85*, (Karachi: East and West Publishing Company, 1984-85), p. 234.

<sup>39</sup> Ahsan Ali Khan, "The Tamil Question in Historical Perspective: Its Impact on Indo-Sri Lanka Relations", *Pakistan Horizon*, XXXVII: 2 (Second Quarter 1984), p. 60.

<sup>40</sup> For instance, Pakistan and India took a similar stand on institutionalising the concept of regional cooperation. See Samina Ahmad, "South Asian Regional Cooperation", *Regional Studies*, 1:3 (Summer 1983), pp. 84-101.

<sup>41</sup> *Sunday* (Calcutta), 27 November 1983; cited in *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>42</sup> *The Pakistan Times*, 30 March 1985.

<sup>43</sup> *Dawn*, 31 March 1985.

<sup>44</sup> See the joint communique in *ibid.* 5 April 1985.

<sup>45</sup> *The Pakistan Times*. 30 March 1985.

<sup>46</sup> *Morning News*, 13 May 1985.

<sup>47</sup> Archives Pakistan's Foreign Office.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> <http://news.lk/news/politics/item/7020-president-maithripala-sirisena-concludes-state-visit-to-pakistan> (Accessed on 8 April 2016).

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.pakistanhc.lk/2016/08/pakistan-reaches-out-to-rehabilitate-agrarian-community-in-eastern-sri-lanka/400> (Accessed on 8 April 2016).



## 4 Defence Cooperation: A Sri Lankan Perspective

*Colonel Chandana Wickramasinghe, RWP RSP*

Relations between Sri Lanka and Pakistan cannot be understood by merely looking at formal or diplomatic interactions between the two countries. The 'psyche' of the people of these two nations has also acted as a galvanising factor in bringing the two countries together. The people of the two nations have had mutual respect towards each other. There were no historical memories of being antagonistic to each other in the past. There was a mutual feeling that the two countries will come to each other's assistance at times of need. This was clearly evident in the development of defence collaboration between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, particularly since the early 1970s.

The governments in Sri Lanka up to 1971, spent only a small percentage of its Gross National Product (GNP) on defence. As Kingsley de Silva noted that neither the SLFP dominated governments nor the UNP led coalitions during this period "did anything to develop even a modest defensive capacity against any external threat, or for that matter even against internal turmoil. The outbreak of the first JVP insurrection in 1971 saw a marked increase in defence expenditure, but it was not sustained beyond 1972, largely because the insurrection was speedily crushed."<sup>1</sup>

The aggravation of the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka since the late 1970s led to the emergence of a militant separatist movement in the country and of several militant groups, which received financial assistance and training facilities from sources outside the country. Some of these groups such as the LTTE resorted to terrorism, and it became one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world. The government had to prepare itself within a short period of time to face this terrorist threat. Following the July 1983 ethnic riots in Sri Lanka, the Western governments, under the pressure of human rights lobbies, refused to give direct military assistance to Sri Lanka. General Cyril Ranatunga has explained Sri Lanka's predicament at the time as follows,

*A major problem that we had was that as a result of the [July 1983] riots, countries who had earlier sold us arms were not willing to sell equipment to Sri Lanka. For instance, in the case of a tender awarded to an American company, the armoured cars were approved by the American Government, but they refused to release the turret and the gun. The British Government refused to give spares and ammunition for the armoured cars we had bought before 1983. The Saladin armoured car [sic] were seen in action in Sri Lanka during the 1971 insurgency. The crisis made it impossible to get spares for them. The Indians were not supplying arms or equipment to us.<sup>2</sup>*

Sri Lanka found itself in a desperate situation in finding military hardware for its armed forces. In this context, Pakistan was among the very few countries, which came to Sri Lanka's assistance in its hour of need.

Close defence cooperation between the two countries commenced in the early 1970s. In 1971, Sri Lanka witnessed its first ever insurgency since independence. The JVP decided to overthrow the government in power through an insurgency. Sri Lanka's then Prime Minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike requested for military assistance from a number of countries including Pakistan. Pakistan extended its fullest support not only by providing arms, but also by subsequently starting a programme to train Sri Lanka's military personnel.

When India denied transit and overflying facilities to Pakistan aircraft in 1971, Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike permitted PIA to use landing and refuelling facilities at the BIA in Sri Lanka. A.J. Wilson observed, "Consequently, aircraft of this airline made 103 technical landings (for refuelling only) at BIA in the month of March and forty landings in April. Further in March 1971, sixteen East-bound and fifteen West-bound Pakistani air force planes touched down at BIA."<sup>3</sup> India complained that Pakistan was using facilities in Sri Lanka to transport war material and soldiers (in civilian clothes) between Western and Eastern parts of the country. Hon. Leslie Goonewardene, the then Minister of Communications of the Government of Sri Lanka, explained that the flights took place only during the time period that the Government of Pakistan

was engaged in negotiations with the Awami League leader, Mujibur Rahman. Denying the charges that Sri Lanka was helping the war efforts of West Pakistan, the Hon. Minister further added that there were “practically no flights other than scheduled flights”<sup>4</sup> during the months of May to September, when East Pakistan issue was reaching at a crisis point. However, considering Sri Lanka’s close relations with India at the time, Mrs. Bandaranaike took a risk in extending transit and refuelling facilities to Pakistani aircraft at a time, when there was a crisis in Indo-Pakistan relations, and for this reason, Pakistan remained eternally grateful to Sri Lanka. This was an event, which has been deeply etched in the memories of the people of Pakistan to this day. This act showed the capacity of Sri Lanka’s long term foreign policy, and it proved her national interest and the capacity to interact with other nations as a sovereign state. It further showed the country’s obligation to respect treaties and law as an independent state.

Pakistan proved to be a valuable partner for the Sri Lankan government in its war against separatism and terrorism. Pakistan unwaveringly and steadfastly supported the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of this small island nation in difficult times. President Zia-ul-Haq, during his visit to Sri Lanka in 1985, had assured that Pakistan would provide all the required military hardware to combat terrorism in the country. As General Cyril Ranatunga explained,

*I met the then President General Zia-ul-Haq when he visited the island. He guaranteed to provide all required military hardware to combat the terrorists in whatever quantities that we in the military required. He never spoke of the finances involved or the procedure. I was inquisitive to know the time gap between such a request and delivery. He clasped my hand and gave me his personal telephone numbers and asked me to ring him any time of the day. He also promised that the requirement would arrive by aircraft and be delivered on time. He assured me that the delay will be only the time to load and the flight time from Pakistan to Sri Lanka. This was a tremendous encouragement to all of us.<sup>5</sup>*

Lieutenant General Nalin Senaviratne, then Commander of the Army, also made a request to General Zia to conduct training courses

in Sri Lanka with the assistance of Pakistani instructors to train our junior leadership. Brigadier Tariq Mahmood, Regimental Commander of the Special Forces, was tasked by General Zia to train the Sri Lankan Army locally. Brigadier Mahmood visited Sri Lanka and after inspecting all the possible training areas, selected Saliyapura, the home of the Gajaba Regiment, as the venue for the special training of Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) and junior leaders. During this period, 500 soldiers were trained and the competencies developed by them were very helpful in the very famous Vadamarachchi Operation, which was initiated after the training in 1987.<sup>6</sup>



Brigadier Tariq Mahmood (in his early years of service)

Source: <http://pakarmedforces.com>

Pakistan's goodwill towards Sri Lanka was quite evident in the way our military personnel were treated with care and concern in the defence colleges and training institutes in Pakistan. As General Gerry Silva (who was appointed 'Equerry' to President General Zia-ul-Haq during his visit in 1985) has explained,

*General Zia instructed the Pakistan Army to build billets for 60 Sri Lankan young officers undergoing training at the Infantry School in Quetta. Pakistani cooks were trained in Sri Lanka to cater to Sri Lankan cuisine. The National Cadet Corps junior leadership was trained [200 at a time] in Shinkiari. The Army requested for and obtained 50% of the vacancies for the second intake as it would be an additional avenue to boost the numbers of the trained junior leadership.<sup>7</sup>*

The major beneficiaries of the training given by the Pakistanis were the Infantry Regiments of SLLI, SLSR, GW and the newly





Pakistani President General Zia-ul-Haq in Colombo on State Visit in 1985

**Source:** Sunday Observer, courtesy Lakehouse Media Library

raised First Battalion of the Gajaba Regiment (I-GR). Retired Warrant Officer Class II, T.M.S. Rodrigo, formerly serving in the Commando Regiment, recollected the services by Brigadier Tariq Mahmood<sup>8</sup> in facilitating parachute training for the Sri Lankan personnel.<sup>9</sup> The Special Service Group (SSG) was in charge of the training conducted in Sri Lanka. Appreciating with gratitude the training facilities provided by Pakistan, the former Commando Rodrigo said, “Pakistan was always behind us throughout our military campaigns until we successfully eradicated the conflict in May 2009 as one of the most successful stories in the world with much gratitude.”<sup>10</sup>

As it has been explained by Gerry H. de Silva, Pakistan always rushed to Sri Lanka’s assistance, whenever Sri Lanka was faced with difficult situations in the war efforts.

*On the eve of the ‘Riviresa’ Operation to take Jaffna in 1995, when supplies from China were delayed and the forces were in a crisis, one telephone call from Sri Lanka saw Pakistan aircraft rushing to Colombo carrying the required hardware, while other neighbours quietly watched. These weapons and ammunition were pulled out from stocks of Pakistan’s Operational areas as the POF was unable to cater to the immediate demand.<sup>11</sup>*

Another occasion when Pakistan's military assistance proved to be critically important for Sri Lanka was the military crisis in the year 2000, when the Sri Lankan Armed Forces were struggling against LTTE offensive at Elephant Pass. Pakistan swiftly responded by providing state-of-the-art weaponry such as the MBRL.<sup>12</sup> If not had been Pakistan's instant support, it would have been difficult to repulse the LTTE onslaught against Jaffna, and thus, Pakistan played a crucial role in helping Sri Lanka to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the island.



Jaffna District

Source: The Sunday Times

Some of the envoys, who served in Colombo and Islamabad, were men with a distinguished military background, and this was a factor, which contributed to more effective defence collaboration between the two countries. Bashir Wali Mohmad, a former Director General of Pakistan's Intelligence Bureau, was appointed as Pakistan's High Commissioner in Sri Lanka from 2004 to 2006. He was succeeded by Air Marshal (Retd.) Shehzad Aslam Chaudhary, who served in this capacity for two years from 2006 to 2008. General Gerry de Silva served as Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in Islamabad during the period 1996-1998. The Commander of the Sri Lanka Army, General C. Srilal Weerasooriya was a personal friend and a colleague of General Pervez Musharraf. After his retirement in 2000, he was appointed as the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Pakistan and served in this capacity for six years. Thereafter Air Marshal Jayalath Weerakkody

was appointed Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Pakistan in 2007. There is no doubt that personal friendships and loyalties played an important role in cementing defence cooperation between Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

By the end of the 1980s, Pakistan emerged as the second largest military aid supplier to Sri Lanka. Pakistan was the main supplier of small arms, whereas, China was the major supplier of aircraft, mainly transport. In addition to mortar ammunition, naval ammunition and hand grenades, Pakistan also supplied state-of-the-art weaponry such as MBRLs. Pakistan not only provided military hardware, but also offered a credit line of US \$ 20 million in 1999 to procure defence equipment.<sup>13</sup> There had been discussion towards the last phase of war, between Sri Lanka and Pakistan, to purchase Al-Khalid Main Battle Tanks. Pakistan has further assisted Sri Lanka by providing "swift technical assistance for its T-55 Main Battle Tanks"<sup>14</sup> at the latter's request. During a research tour to Pakistan, the writer understood that, as a whole, there has been a tremendous contribution by the serving and retired Pakistan military officers, who had an enthusiastic approach and attitude to assist Sri Lanka, whenever the circumstances occurred and demanded.



Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL)

**Source:** Sri Lanka Army



T55 Battle Tank

Source: <http://pakarmedforces.com>

Former Pakistan High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Bashir Wali Mohammad was openly critical of terrorist activities of the LTTE and was very active in promoting Pakistan's military assistance to the Sri Lankan government, which angered the LTTE. In August 2006, the LTTE made an assassination attempt on the life of the Pakistan's High Commissioner. Even though he escaped unhurt, seven people including four Army commandoes were killed in the blast.<sup>15</sup>

Pakistan collaborates with Sri Lanka both at bilateral and multilateral levels in countering terrorism and transnational crimes. Both countries were signatories to the Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, which was signed in November 1987 at the Third SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu. Subsequently several measures were taken to strengthen this Convention. A Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was adopted at the Fifth SAARC Summit (Male) in November 1990. An Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism was adopted at the SAARC Summit held in Islamabad in January 2004 for the prevention of the financing of terrorism. The SAARC Convention on

Mutual Legal Assistance adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> Summit held in Colombo in August 2008 to provide for legal assistance in investigations and prosecution in criminal matters including terrorism.<sup>16</sup>

Pakistan and Sri Lanka have taken various measures at bilateral level for the implementation of these regional agreements. Pakistan has helped Sri Lanka in training its military and police personnel in intelligence gathering, countering terrorism and transnational crimes. During the visit of Sri Lankan Interior Minister Hon. John Amarasinghe to Pakistan in September 2003, the two countries signed an agreement to enhance cooperation in combatting terrorism, human trafficking and drug trafficking.<sup>17</sup> During President Chandrika Bandaranaike's visit to Pakistan in February 2005, the two countries agreed to "strengthen judicial cooperation between them and improve the effectiveness of the law enforcement agencies through cooperation and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters."<sup>18</sup> During Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's recent visit to Sri Lanka in January 2016, the two countries signed an agreement to exchange financial intelligence to combat money laundering and terrorism financing.

Even after the end of the separatist movement in the island, Sri Lanka and Pakistan continue to broaden and deepen the defence and military collaboration between the two countries. The Armed Forces Staff Talks was inaugurated in 2012 to discuss defence matters of mutual interest such as training, joint exercises, research and development, and military exchange programmes. Now this has become an annual event and the third round of the series was held in September 2015. The Sri Lankan delegation was led by the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Kolitha Gunathilake and the Pakistani delegation was led by Major General Iftikhar Ahmad Wajid.<sup>19</sup>

Pakistan's COAS General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani visited Sri Lanka in June 2013 and promised to increase military training facilities to Sri Lankans. This was his second visit to the country since 2011.<sup>20</sup> In June 2015, General Raheel Sharif, COAS of the Pakistan Army gifted eight horses of high breed to the Sri Lanka Military Academy (SLMA) in Diyatalawa. These horses are being used for the purpose of enhancing the knowledge of SLMA officers on equestrian skills as part of their training modules.<sup>21</sup>



Ceremonial Handing Over and Taking Over of Horses from the Pakistan Army to the Sri Lanka Army

**Source:** Sri Lanka Army

During the fight against the LTTE, Pakistan extended its assistance not only to the Sri Lanka Army, but also to the Navy and Air Force. Therefore, high-level visits between the Tri-Services of both countries took place on a regular basis. Admiral (Retd.) D.W.A.S. Dissanayake visited Pakistan as Commander of the Navy in June 2012, followed by a visit of Vice Admiral J.S.K. Colombage in November 2012.<sup>22</sup> Pakistan's CNS Admiral Mohammad Asif Sandila visited Sri Lanka in December 2013. The Pakistan Navy also commenced a programme to send young officers to Sri Lanka for training in Asymmetric Warfare. It is important to note that the Sri Lankan Navy has dispatched, for the first time, its naval ship to participate in AMAN 13 exercise conducted by the Pakistan Navy with several other countries.<sup>23</sup>

The Sri Lankan Chapter of PNWCAA was launched in Colombo in December 2013. Pakistan's visiting CNS, Admiral Mohammad Asif Sandila graced this event as the Guest of Honour. The High Commissioner of Pakistan in Sri Lanka Major General (Retd.) Qasim Qureshi, Commander of Sri Lankan Navy Vice Admiral (Retd.) Jayanath Colombage, and Chief of Defence Staff General (Retd.) Jagath Jayasuriya also took part in the event. The Naval War College is Pakistan Navy's premier institution providing training to mid-career officers of the Pakistan Navy as well as to a limited number of officers from the PAF, the Pakistan Army and various allied forces. A large number of allied officers from several other countries including Sri Lanka have also graduated from this premier institution.<sup>24</sup>



Launch of the Pakistan Naval War College Alumni Association

**Source:** Pakistan Defence News Blog

The Sri Lankan Air Force was also a significant beneficiary of Pakistan's assistance during the war in terms of equipment and pilot training. In February 2012, Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), Air Marshal Harsha Abeywickrama led a senior SLAF delegation on the invitation of Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleman, Chief of the Air Staff of the PAF.



C130 Air Craft

**Source:** <http://pakarmedforces.com>

During this visit, he also paid a courtesy call on Pakistan's COAS, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and had discussions on matters of

mutual interest.<sup>25</sup> The Air Chief of Pakistan, Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt visited Sri Lanka in August 2014.<sup>26</sup> Air Marshal Kolitha Gunatilleke visited Air Headquarters in Pakistan in November 2014 and called on Chief of Air Staff (PAF) Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt to discuss matters of mutual interest.<sup>27</sup>

During his visit to Sri Lanka in June 2015, while addressing the Quetta Alumni Association, an organisation of a group of Sri Lankan military personnel trained in Pakistan, the Pakistan's COAS General Raheel Sharif stated that defence and security cooperation was central to the special relationship between Sri Lanka and Pakistan. He further stated, "We will always stand with our brothers [Sri Lankans] on their way to greater security and prosperity."<sup>28</sup> Even though the 30-year separatist movement has ended in Sri Lanka, it does not mean the end of defence cooperation between Sri Lanka and Pakistan. A solid foundation has already been laid to build a multi-faceted relationship between the two countries and defence and security cooperation will constitute an integral part of that relationship.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> K. M. de Silva, *Regional Powers & Small State Security*, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House PVT Ltd., 1996), 18.; Also see, K.M.de Silva, Sri Lanka: Political-Military Relations (Working Paper 3), (The Hague: Clingendael, November 2001), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Gen Cyril Ranatunga, *Adventurous Journey: From Peace to War, in Insurgency to Terrorism*, (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2009), 110-111.

<sup>3</sup> A. J. Wilson, *Politics in Sri Lanka, 1947-1973* (Bristol: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1974), 269.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ranatunga, *Adventurous Journey*, 111.

<sup>6</sup> General (R) G.H. De Silva, *The Most Noble Profession: Memories that Linger*, (Orient Publishers, 2011), 62.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Brigadier Tariq Mahmood was one of the most decorated officers who served for Gen Zia ul-Huq, and he was decorated many times as a veteran. He died an untimely death in an accident a year after the death of General Zia-ul-Haq in a plane crash on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Shamindra Fernando, "The Zia Factor in Sri Lanka- Pakistan Relationship: War on Terror Revisited," *The Island*, June 13, 2013, <http://generalzia.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-zia-factor-in-sri-lanka-pakistan.html>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Gerry H. de Silva, "Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations: Military and Strategic Dimensions," *Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations* (Proceedings of a One-Day Seminar), (Islamabad, Institute of Strategic Studies, 1997), 27.

<sup>12</sup> *125 wasaraka prathyawalokanaya sri lanka kalathuwakku hamudawa* (Reflections of 125 Years of the Regiment of Sri Lanka Artillery), Colombo: Regiment of Sri Lanka Artillery, 2004, 77.

<sup>13</sup> Anjali Sharma, "Redefining Sri Lanka-Pakistan Ties: An Indian Perspective," <http://www.vifindia.org/article/2011/may/18/Redefining-Sri-Lanka%E2%80%93Pakistan-Ties-an-Indian-Perspective> (Accessed June 05, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Moonis Ahmer, "Pakistan-Sri Lankan Relations and the Indian Response," in Sumanasiri Liyanage, P. Sahadevan and Anisha Kinra (ed), *Intra-State Conflict and Inter-State Relations: Perspectives on India-Sri Lanka Relations*, (Manak Pub., 2011), 183.

<sup>16</sup> For details, see: Amal Jayawardane, "Countering Terrorism: Perspectives from Sri Lanka," in Maj. Gen Dipankar Banerjee & D. Suba Chandran & Devyani Srivastava (ed.) *Countering Terrorism: Building a Common Approach in SAARC*, (Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Ltd., 2010), 133-135.

<sup>17</sup> Ahmer. "Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations," 185.

<sup>18</sup> As quoted in Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> “Pakistan - Sri Lanka Armed Forces Staff Talks held,” [http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=Pakistan\\_Sri\\_Lanka\\_Armed\\_Forces\\_Staff\\_Talks\\_held\\_20150917\\_06](http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=Pakistan_Sri_Lanka_Armed_Forces_Staff_Talks_held_20150917_06) (Accessed on June 04, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Yasasmin Kaviratne, “Pakistan was always there for Sri Lanka: Gen. Kayani”, *Sunday Times*, [http://www.sundaytimes.lk/110123/News/nws\\_11.html](http://www.sundaytimes.lk/110123/News/nws_11.html), (Accessed on May 13, 2016).

<sup>21</sup> “Pakistan Army Chief gifts horses to SL Army for training purposes,” *Official Government News Portal of Sri Lanka*, <http://www.news.lk/news/sri-lanka/item/8102-pakistan-army-chief-gifts-horses-to-sl-army-for-training-purposes> (Accessed on June 04, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> “Pakistan, Sri Lanka to strengthen defense cooperation,” *Global Times*, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/831782.shtml> (Accessed on June 4, 2016)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> *Sri Lanka Air Force*, “Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force Visits Pakistan”, <http://www.airforce.lk/news.php?news=1013> (Accessed on May 13, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> *High Commission of Pakistan, Colombo*, “Air Chief of Pakistan to arrive in Sri Lanka today,” <http://www.pakistanhc.lk/2014/08/air-chief-of-pakistan-to-arrive-in-sri-lanka-today/> (Accessed on June 02, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> *Pakistan Defence*, “Sri Lankan Air Force Commander visits Air Headquarters, PAC, Kamra,” <http://defence.pk/threads/sri-lankan-air-force-commander-visits-air-headquarters-pac-kamra.34590> (Accessed on June 02, 2016)

<sup>28</sup> *The Express Tribune*, “Defence cooperation central to Pakistan’s relationship with Sri Lanka: Gen. Raheel,” <http://tribune.com.pk/story/899444/defence-cooperation-central-to-pakistans-relationship-with-sri-lanka-gen-raheel/> (Accessed on June 7, 2016).

## 5 The Geopolitics of Sri Lanka-Pakistan Relations: A Sri Lankan Perspective

*Dr. Sithara Fernando*

Each country has its own geopolitical significance. In terms of geographic location, both Sri Lanka and Pakistan are significant. Sri Lanka's geopolitical significance lies in its central location in the Indian Ocean. In relation to the middle segment of the major East-West sea lane in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka occupies a very important place. The centrality of Sri Lanka's location in the Indian Ocean also entails that many parts of the Indian Ocean littoral can be reached from Sri Lanka. Pakistan's geopolitical significance lies in the way it links Central Asia with the Indian Ocean and vice versa. Pakistan also occupies a location in which the spheres of influence of major powers such as India, China and Russia overlap. The geographic location of each country can be useful to the other. The geopolitical relationship between the two countries depend on the geopolitical importance of each country in itself and the geopolitical importance of each country to the other.

The broader regional geopolitics in the IOR and Asia can influence the Sri Lanka-Pakistan relationship. The geopolitical competition between the major powers, i.e., China and India for influence in the IOR could have an impact on the region. For example, China will attempt to obtain the support of Sri Lanka and Pakistan for China's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Route initiative. India might attempt to obtain the support of Sri Lanka and Pakistan for Indian leadership in the IOR. The efforts of India and China to expand their geopolitical influence can pose strategic challenges for Sri Lanka and Pakistan. In the best interests of Sri Lanka and Pakistan, the effort in this chapter is to focus on the geopolitics of the Sri Lanka-Pakistan relationship with these two countries on the centre stage with the broader regional geopolitics being considered in an incidental manner.

Thus, this chapter will first elaborate on the geopolitical importance of both countries and then focus on the geopolitical importance of each country to the other. Given the geopolitical significance of both countries, the chapter will also examine their approaches to regionalism. In addition, it will also dwell on the prospects for counterterrorism cooperation between the two countries from a geopolitical perspective.

### **Geopolitical Importance of Sri Lanka**

The American naval thinker, Alfred Thayer Mahan, is commonly acknowledged as an influential contributor to the discipline of geopolitics. His most important contribution was the identification of the six elements of sea power. The six elements of sea power identified by Mahan are as follows: 1) geographical position; 2) physical confirmation; 3) extent of territory; 4) number of population; 5) national character; and 6) character of the government.<sup>1</sup> Many of these principles, in particular the first four principles, are obviously of importance for geopolitics, because Sri Lanka is an island country located in the Indian Ocean, and the application of some of Mahan's elements of sea power to Sri Lanka can give us a sound understanding of its geopolitical importance.

### **Indian Ocean**



Source:

[https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/islands\\_oceans\\_poles/indianoceanarea.jpg](https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/islands_oceans_poles/indianoceanarea.jpg)

Mahan's first element of sea power, geographical position, contains several principles. The first principle of Mahan's first element is that being an island by itself is conducive to a nation's sea power. Sri Lanka, as is well-known, is an island, surrounded by the sea. The strategic significance of this factor is that Sri Lanka does not have any land borders to defend against an external power. The second principle of the first element is that the geographical position of a country can influence the issue of concentration and dispersion of naval forces in a significant way. Here too the fact that Sri Lanka is surrounded on all sides by the sea enables a concentration of forces in home waters. The fifth principle of the first element is that easy access to the high sea and a dominant position in relation to a busy sea lane can enhance a country's sea power. Here, Sri Lanka is situated very close to one of the Indian Ocean's major shipping lanes. This gives Sri Lanka considerable geopolitical leverage in the Indian Ocean.

Mahan's fifth element, based on the assertion that a country's sea power is based on maritime commerce, states that a country's national character must be imbued with a skill for commercial pursuits. Sri Lankan national character is more associated with agrarian pursuits than commercial ones. Given the well-established link between commerce and sea power, from colonial Europe to contemporary China, the Sri Lankan national character must be imbibed with the value of commerce without diminishing its core agrarian identity. Mahan's sixth element states that the government should nurture the existing commercial aptitudes of its population or try to create and develop such aptitudes, if they do not exist. In this respect, under the concept of 'Sri Lanka as a Hub in Asia,' Sri Lanka is attempting to become a commercial hub and this could include the development of commercial aptitudes within its population.

This application of some of Mahan's elements of sea power to Sri Lanka clarifies that Sri Lanka's geographic status and location as an island located towards the centre of the Indian Ocean, very close to one of the busiest sea lanes can provide a solid foundation for Sri Lanka's emergence as a small maritime power. The geopolitical leverage Sri Lanka has by virtue of its proximity to the major East-West shipping lane in the Indian Ocean can be utilised to facilitate its emergence as a small maritime power.

## Geopolitical Importance of Pakistan

### Map of Asia



Source:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Asia/@20.3283125,46.9712838,3z/m4!1s0x3663f18a24cbe857:0xa9416bfcd3a0f459!8m2!3d34.047863!4d100.6196553>

If one looks at the map of Asia, Pakistan's geopolitical importance becomes immediately obvious. Pakistan extends diagonally from the Gulf of Oman in the Indian Ocean in the South towards Central Asia in the North. Thus, Pakistan can connect the Indian Ocean with Central Asia. As pointed out by Admiral (Retd.) Arun Praksash, a former CNS of the Indian Navy, during the early days of the Cold War, the US and Britain were worried that the Soviet Union which controlled Central Asia at the time would try to gain access to the Indian Ocean through Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> During US operations in Afghanistan against the Al-Qaeda, it established an understanding with Pakistan to assist in the operations. This was clearly due to Pakistan's geographic location. Thus, Pakistan can facilitate access both from Central Asia into the Indian Ocean and from the Indian Ocean into Central Asia. Pakistan is separated from the Central Asian country of Tajikistan only by a narrow corridor of Afghan territory.

Apart from Pakistan's geopolitical role as a bridge between the Indian Ocean and Central Asia, Pakistan's other claim to geopolitical importance is the fact that it is surrounded by major powers such as China, Russia, India and Iran. Pakistan shares borders with China,

India and Iran, and Northern Pakistan is not too far from Russia's sphere of influence. Thus, Pakistan lies at a location, where the spheres of influence of major powers overlap. This geographical fact entails that Pakistan will be vulnerable to the competing influences of these regional powers. However, Pakistan's geographic location also offers it the opportunity to participate in the regional politics of South Asia, Indian Ocean, Central Asia and the Middle East.

### Map of Pakistan and Central Asia



Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/seasoldier/maps-of-central-asia/>

### Geopolitical Importance of Sri Lanka to Pakistan

To repeat, Sri Lanka is located just North of the major East-West sea lane in the Indian Ocean. This sea lane proceeds through the Straits of Malacca onward to Southeast and East Asia. Pakistan is connected to the developed economy of Japan and the emerging economies of Southeast Asia through this sea lane. Thus, Sri Lanka occupies a strategic position in relation to Pakistan's trade routes to Southeast and East Asia.

Pakistan's trade with Japan and Southeast Asia is not insignificant. In 1995-96, Japan provided 11 percent of Pakistan's imports. During the same period, Japan provided 71 percent of Pakistan's imports of transport equipment. In 1996-97, Japan provided 56 percent Pakistan's imports of transport equipment.<sup>3</sup> In 2011, Pakistan-Japan trade amounted to US \$ 2.2 billion. In the same year, Pakistan's exports

to Japan amounted to US \$ 0.46 billion and Pakistan's imports from Japan amounted to US \$ 1.69 billion. By the first half of the decade starting in 2010, Pakistan's imports of automobile related products from Japan amounted to 42 percent of Pakistan's overall imports from Japan.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is clear that Japan is an important trade partner for Pakistan.

Pakistan's exports to the Southeast Asian countries in 2009 made up 2.25 percent of its total exports. More significantly, Pakistan's imports from Southeast Asian countries in 2009 made up 11.61 percent of its total imports. Pakistan-Singapore trade amounted to US \$ 1.02 billion in 2004-05. Pakistan's exports to Singapore include cotton, textiles, sugar and rice. Pakistan imports from Singapore, machinery and parts, chemical elements and crude rubber. Pakistan-Malaysia trade stood at US \$ 755.5 million in the middle of the decade starting in 2000. Pakistan exports to Malaysia rice, textiles, wheat, cotton yarn, fish and fish preparations, arms and ammunition, sports goods, hides, skins and fur skins. Pakistan imports from Malaysia, fixed vegetable oil and fats, machinery and parts, chemical elements and compounds, animal and vegetable oil and fats, chemical material and products, crude rubber, yarn and thread of synthetic fibre, cork and wood manufactures of non-ferrous metals, and articles of rubber. Pakistan is Malaysia's fourth largest trade partner in the OIC. By the early years of the decade starting in 2010, Pakistan-Indonesia trade stood at approximately US \$ 1 billion. Pakistan's exports to Indonesia are cotton yarn and woven fabrics, fish and fish preparations, leather and leather manufactures, textiles, fruits and nuts. Pakistan imports from Indonesia animal or vegetable fats and oils, petroleum products and oil, man-made fibre and yarns, paper, paperboard and articles and organic chemicals. Pakistan is also a major exporter of rice to Thailand.<sup>5</sup> Thus it is clear that Pakistan's trade with Southeast Asia is important and substantial.

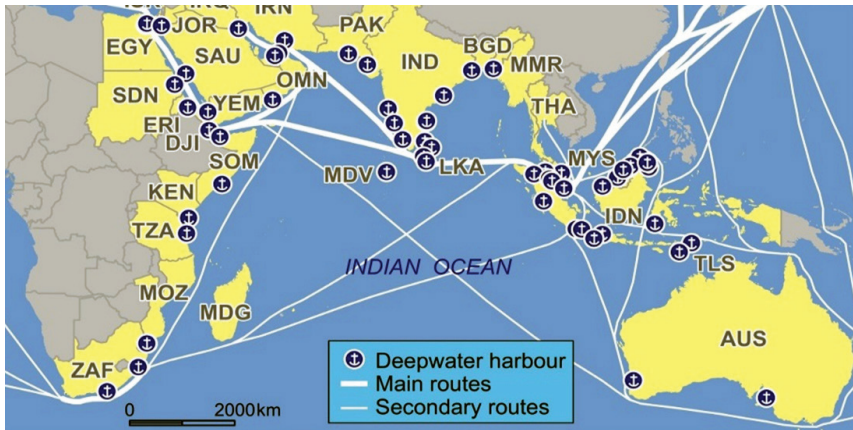
The available literature on Pakistan's relations with Southeast and East Asia makes clear that Pakistan is interested in enhancing its trade relations with these regions in a major way. Sri Lanka's geopolitical location ensures that Sri Lanka is in a position to offer assistance to Pakistan albeit at an institutional-level in the protection of its maritime



trade routes to Southeast and East Asia. Given, Sri Lanka's central location in the IOR, its annual maritime security forum, the Galle Dialogue, is well attended by regional and extra-regional countries. The Galle Dialogue was initiated in 2010 and it has been held every year since. The number of countries attending increased from 11 countries in 2010 to 35 countries in 2013.<sup>6</sup> Pakistan has been a much-valued participant in the deliberations of the Galle Dialogue. Sri Lanka's annual maritime security forum could provide Pakistan an opportunity to share with the maritime community of nations what could be an emerging concern with the security of its maritime trade with Southeast and East Asia. Furthermore, currently the IORA is beginning to establish itself as the apex regional organisation in the IOR. In its 'Gurgaon Communique' of the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, the IORA "welcomed the emphasis on maritime security cooperation and reaffirmed the importance of the maintenance of freedom of navigation and the safety and security of sea lanes in the Indian Ocean."<sup>7</sup> What is known as the IORA today was earlier known as the Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). When the IOR-ARC was established in the late-1990s, its key area of focus was regional trade and investment facilitation. But through the early years of the decade starting in 2010 the IOR-ARC, now known as the IORA, began including maritime security in its deliberations. As the IORA is showing signs of establishing itself as the apex regional organisation in the IOR, it would make sense to include a maritime security component within it.

The growth of regional trade would surely mean the growth of regional shipping and the regional community of states must give some thought to the all-important matter of the security of shipping. To date Pakistan has not joined the IORA. Given the growing importance of the IORA and the institutional role it could play in securing regional shipping Pakistan might do well to think about joining the IORA, and as a member, Sri Lanka could support Pakistan's membership in the IORA. As indicated by Pakistan's Jamshed Ayaz Khan, while Pakistan is interested in joining the IORA, India is making it difficult for Pakistan to become a member of that organisation.<sup>8</sup>

### **Pakistan's Trade Routes with Southeast and East Asia**



Source:

<https://chellaney.net/2015/07/01/worlds-geopolitical-center-of-gravity-shifts-to-indian-ocean/>

### **Geopolitical Importance of Pakistan to Sri Lanka**

Pakistan connects Central Asia with the Indian Ocean Region and vice versa. Since the end of the Cold War, Central Asia has been identified as a region containing substantial energy resources. Sri Lanka imports most of its energy and having a diverse range of energy suppliers and energy sources will enhance Sri Lanka's energy security because then Sri Lanka will not be overly dependent on any one energy supplier or any one energy source. Pakistan's geopolitical location can be useful to Sri Lanka in gaining access to Central Asian energy resources.

Central Asian countries occupy fairly high positions on world energy rankings. Central Asia consists of the following countries: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In 2013, in terms of crude oil reserves, Kazakhstan was ranked at No. 11 in the world. In 2012, in terms of crude oil exports, Kazakhstan was ranked at No. 12 in the world. In terms of natural gas reserves, currently Turkmenistan is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the world. In terms of natural gas exports, Turkmenistan is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the world. In terms of oil reserves, Uzbekistan is ranked at 48 in the world. In terms of natural gas reserves, Uzbekistan is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in the world. In terms of natural gas production, Uzbekistan is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the world.<sup>9</sup>

From the above statistics, it is clear that Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are the Central Asian countries with substantial energy resources. Turkmenistan is particularly noteworthy for its natural gas reserves. To repeat, in terms of natural gas reserves, Turkmenistan is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the world and in terms of natural gas exports, Turkmenistan is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the world. Thus, it is clear that Turkmenistan has more room to improve as far as natural gas exports are concerned, after of course, providing for its own domestic energy needs.

As stated by Umbreen Javaid and Azhar Rashid,

*The Central Asia region has enormous hydrocarbon resources while Pakistan is an energy deficit country. The geo strategic location of Pakistan enables it to not only exploit these natural resources but could also provide [an] energy corridor for export of oil and gas.*<sup>10</sup>

The process aiming to construct an energy corridor from Turkmenistan, the Central Asian natural gas power house, to Pakistan began in 1995. This project is known as the TAPI gas pipeline. In 2008, the countries involved signed a framework agreement on the TAPI gas pipeline.<sup>11</sup> If this pipeline project is completed and Pakistan

### Map of Central Asia and Pakistan



Source:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/a/@38.3969239,58.5728445,5z/4!1s0x3663f18a24cbe857:0xa9416bfcd3a0f459!8m2!3d34.04786314d100.6196553>

proceeds with the export of energy after providing for its domestic needs of course, Sri Lanka could tap into Turkmenistan's vast natural gas resources through Pakistan. Natural gas could provide Sri Lanka with a relatively environmentally friendly energy option in comparison to coal and oil.

### **Sri Lanka's Approaches to Regionalism<sup>12</sup>**

In the early decades of Sri Lanka's independence, i.e., in the 1950s and 1960s, Sri Lanka's approach to regionalism was pan-Asian. This pan-Asian approach saw South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia as one whole. Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawala and Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, all subscribed to the pan-Asian vision. This era saw Sri Lanka giving leadership to pan-Asian initiatives such as the Colombo Powers Conferences of 1954 and 1962. The Colombo Conference of 1962 was aimed at mediating the India-China border dispute of that year, which was a great blow to Asian solidarity.

During Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's tenure from 1970-77, one can see an emphasis on the IOR also emerging in Sri Lanka's approach to regionalism. This took the form of the IOZP initiative. This was a critical initiative at the time of the Cold War in support of peace and stability, when there were signs of the superpower conflict spilling over into the IOR. The proposal was adopted by the UN General Assembly and referred to an Ad Hoc committee for implementation. While, due to the opposition of powerful countries, which saw in it a curb on their freedom of action, it failed to make much headway; it marked the beginning of independent Sri Lanka's interest in the Indian Ocean as a region. This interest in Indian Ocean regionalism continued unabated in the 1980s with the efforts to set up the IOMAC as an organisation.

However, in the 1980s, one can discern a certain weakening of pan-Asianism in Sri Lanka's approach to regionalism. The 1980s was the decade in which South Asian regionalism emerged as a dominant approach to regionalism in Sri Lanka. During President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga's (1994-2005) time in office, and more particularly under the visionary leadership of her Foreign Minister the late Lakshman Kadirgamar, while Sri Lanka continued to stay engaged with South Asian regionalism through the SAARC and Indian Ocean

regionalism by becoming a member of the IOR-ARC launched in 1997, it also began looking to the Asia-Pacific region by seeking membership in the APEC forum. Sri Lanka hosted the Council of Ministers meetings of the IOR-ARC in 2003 and 2004. During the tenure of President Mahinda Rajapaksa (2005-2015), while continuing its previous regional engagements, Sri Lanka began participating in the ARF since 2007, and in the IONS since 2008. Further, Sri Lanka was accepted as a Dialogue Partner of the SCO in 2009.

Thus, regionalism in independent Sri Lanka's foreign policy can be characterised as pertaining to the continental region of Asia and the maritime region of the Indian Ocean. With regard to the former, it began with a pan-Asian focus, then narrowed to South Asia in the 1980s, and since the mid-1990s has again acquired the characteristics of pan-Asianism, while its interest in the latter, which began in the 1970s has continued unabated till date.

### **Pakistan's Approaches to Regionalism**

The geographic configuration of South Asia is such that India is central to this particular sub-region. India shares land or maritime borders with all the South Asian countries except Afghanistan. Among the other South Asian countries only Pakistan and Afghanistan share a land border, and Sri Lanka and the Maldives share a maritime border.

#### **Map of South Asia**



Source:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/a/@25.5267423,67.2740167,4z/4m5!3m4!1s0x3663f18a24cbe857:0xa9416bfcd3a0f459!8m2!3d34.047863!4d100.6196553>

After the alleged role played by India in the break-up of Pakistan in 1971, the latter country became conscious of Indian hegemonic design in South Asia. Thus, in the early years of South Asian regionalism in the late 1970s, Pakistan was not too enthusiastic. However, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 posed a serious threat to Pakistan's security. This Soviet thrust motivated Pakistan to join the SAARC in 1985.<sup>13</sup> As indicated in Admiral (Retd.) Arun Prakash's historical revelation, as mentioned earlier, the Soviet Union had an interest in obtaining access to the Indian Ocean, and Pakistan provided a good avenue for that. At the height of the Cold War in the 1980s, such an interest would have made geopolitical sense from the point of view of the Soviet Union. However, as time went on, Pakistan became progressively more integrated with the South Asian region through the socio-economic and technical cooperation promoted by the SAARC.

### Pre-1971 Pakistan



Source: <https://sites.google.com/site/mbhsh1/india-pakistan-map>

In 1971, East Pakistan became Bangladesh and Pakistan's geographic link to Southeast Asia was severed. It was only in the 1990s that Pakistan, based on economic motives, began efforts to improve its relations with Southeast and Northeast Asia once again. In the intervening period, that is through the 1970s and 1980s, Southeast and Northeast Asia as sub-regions surpassed South Asia in terms of economic development. This prompted Pakistan in the 1990s to look to Southeast and Northeast Asia for trade, investment and economic ties. Pakistan became a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1993. Pakistan

joined the ARF for security dialogue and signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation with ASEAN in 2004. In October 2003, Pakistan formally declared its 'Vision East Asia'. Pakistan's 'Vision East Asia' includes both Southeast and Northeast Asia.<sup>14</sup> Between 2004 and 2013, Pakistan's trade with ASEAN went from US \$ 2.2 billion to US \$ 6.6 billion. Pakistan signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Indonesia in 2012. Pakistan signed an FTA with China in 2007. It has been proposed that Pakistan sign more PTAs and FTAs with East Asian countries.<sup>15</sup> Pakistan is also keen on joining the APEC forum.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Pakistan is clearly looking to enhance its relations with the Southeast and Northeast Asian sub-regions and the Asia-Pacific region in pursuit of its economic interests. As the Southeast and Northeast Asian sub-regions and the Asia-Pacific Region are economically more developed than the South Asian sub-region, if Pakistan keeps the focus on developing its own economy, economic ties with Southeast and Northeast Asia, and the Asia-Pacific, would be sure to benefit Pakistan. Pakistan's national income would benefit, if Pakistan focused on increasing its exports to Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific.

Pakistan's interests in Central Asian regionalism lies in countering terrorism, gaining access to energy from the energy 'power houses' of that sub-region, and facilitating the trade of this land-locked sub-region. Pakistan became a member of the SCO that embodies Central Asian regionalism in 2016. Pakistan has offered the land-locked Central Asian states transit facilities to promote their international trade.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Pakistan can leverage its geographic location linking Central Asia with the Indian Ocean and vice versa to pursue its interests in countering terrorism, accessing energy and facilitating the international trade of the Central Asian sub-region.

Pakistan is also a member of the ECO. The membership of the ECO is of much geographic interest. The members of the ECO are the following states: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>18</sup> The states of the ECO belong to several neighbouring sub-regions. Afghanistan and Pakistan belong to the South Asian sub-region. Azerbaijan belongs to the Eurasian Caucasus sub-region. Iran and Turkey belong to the Middle Eastern region. Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan belong to the Central Asian sub-region. Thus, the member states of the ECO belong to the South Asian, Caucasus, Middle Eastern and Central Asian sub-regions. Pakistan's membership in the ECO highlights the significance of Pakistan in continental geography.

Pakistan's interest in facilitating the trade of land-locked Afghanistan and Central Asia gives Pakistan an additional interest in Indian Ocean regionalism, because as is well known oceans serve as a 'transport surface'<sup>19</sup> for much international trade. Pakistan is interested in joining the IORI, but in the middle of the decade starting in 2000, India's reason for opposing Pakistan's membership in the IORA was that Pakistan had not granted MFN status to India.<sup>20</sup> However, from the point of view of the Indian Ocean region as a whole, Pakistan's membership in the IORA would be beneficial because Pakistan's geographic location can facilitate access from the Indian Ocean into Central Asia and vice versa. A similar point is made by Mr. Jamshed Ayaz Khan in his paper cited above.

### **Counterterrorism Cooperation**

Both Sri Lanka and Pakistan have borne the brunt of terrorism. Sri Lanka experienced a protracted separatist conflict, which ended in 2009. As a result of fighting against the separatist terrorist group, the LTTE, the Sri Lankan armed and law enforcement forces have accumulated a wealth of experience in counterterrorism. After the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan has seen a high incidence of terrorist attacks on its soil. Therefore, Pakistan too has had about 15 years' experience in fighting terrorism. Thus, the Sri Lankan and Pakistani armed and law enforcement forces have a lot to gain from cooperating with each other on counterterrorism. They can start with sharing their counterterrorism experiences.

The key area within counterterrorism that Sri Lanka and Pakistan should cooperate is the monitoring and interception of the movement of terrorists. This type of cooperation should involve the Navies, Coast Guards and the law enforcement agencies of both countries.

### **Conclusion**

Both, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, occupy geopolitically significant locations. The geopolitically significant locations of each country



can be useful to the other. Sri Lanka's geopolitical location can be useful to Pakistan in providing for the security of its trade routes with Southeast and East Asia. Given Pakistan's intention to develop its trade with Southeast and East Asia in a major way, this could be a concern that will become even more important in the future. Pakistan's geopolitical location can be useful to Sri Lanka in obtaining access to the vast natural gas reserves of Turkmenistan. Natural gas could provide Sri Lanka with a relatively environmentally friendly energy option to coal and oil. Thus, it is clear that Sri Lanka and Pakistan can be geopolitically useful to each other.

It is interesting to compare and contrast Sri Lanka's and Pakistan's approaches to regionalism. Sri Lanka's significance as an island located towards the middle of the Indian Ocean lies in maritime geopolitics. Pakistan's significance as an Indian Ocean coastal state that extends diagonally towards Central Asia lies in continental geopolitics and as an area that links continental and maritime geopolitics. The way in which contemporary Pakistan is linked to different continental sub-regions is phenomenal. Contemporary Pakistan is linked to the continental sub-regions of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. Similarly, the way in which Sri Lanka is linked to different maritime sub-regions, is noteworthy. Sri Lanka occupies a location linking the Arabian Sea in the West and the Bay of Bengal in the East with the central part of the Indian Ocean. Thus, Pakistan's importance in continental geopolitics in Asia is as critical as Sri Lanka's importance in maritime geopolitics in the Indian Ocean.

Thus, the broad region that would truly maximise the power and influence accruing to Pakistan from its geographic location would be Asia just as the broad region that would truly maximise the power and influence accruing to Sri Lanka from its geographic location would be the Indian Ocean. One can also discern a prevalence of idealism in Sri Lanka's approaches to regionalism and a prevalence of realism in Pakistan's approaches to regionalism. Both countries can learn from the other in arriving at a judicious combination of idealism and realism in their approaches to regionalism. Both countries are also keen on developing relations with the economically better developed Southeast and East Asian sub-regions. This Southeast and East Asian regional orientation can be beneficial to both countries, if they maintain a focus on developing their own economies.

Sri Lanka and Pakistan have much to gain by helping each other to capitalise on their geopolitical significance and by utilising each other's geopolitical significance. However, Sri Lanka and Pakistan's efforts to capitalise on their geopolitical significance and to utilise each other's geopolitical significance, they will both have to contend with the broader regional geopolitics between the major powers of the region. The foreign policies of Sri Lanka and Pakistan will have to be geared to adroitly deal with the geopolitical competition between China and India in their best national interests as well as in the interests of regional peace and stability. Thus, clearly a geopolitical analysis has much to add to the Sri Lanka-Pakistan relationship.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783*, Dover Publications Inc.: New York, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Arun Prakash, 'India's Maritime Growth: Rationale and Objectives', *Varuna Vak*, National Maritime Foundation Policy Paper No. 1, New Delhi, July 2011, pp. 17-18.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aslam Chaudhary and Kiyoshi Abe, 'Pakistan, Japan and ASEAN Trade Relations and Economic Development', *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2 (Winter 2000), pp. 202-203.

<sup>4</sup> Address to the Rotary Club of Karachi, The Relationship between Japan and Pakistan, [www.kr.pk.emb-japan.go.jp/images/Rotary%20Club%20Lecture1.pdf](http://www.kr.pk.emb-japan.go.jp/images/Rotary%20Club%20Lecture1.pdf), accessed on 9 May 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Rummana Zaheer, 'Why Pakistan is Interested to Join ASEAN', *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume 10 Issue 4, May-June 2013, Pp. 6-7.

<sup>6</sup> Sithara Fernando, 'The Contribution of the Galle Dialogue to Maritime Security Cooperation: Present Status and Future Possibilities', *Alumni Perspectives*, Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies (APCSS), Hawaii, May 2014, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Sithara Fernando, *China's Maritime Relations with South Asia: From Confrontation to Cooperation*, Lambert Academic Publishing: Saarbrücken, 2012, p. 185.

<sup>8</sup> Jamshed Ayaz Khan, 'Pakistan and Regionalism', in Alyson J.K. Bayles, John Gooneratne, Mavara Inayat, Jamshed Ayaz Khan and Swaran Singh, 'Regionalism in South Asian Diplomacy', SIPRI Policy Paper No. 15, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), February 2007, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> Umbreen Javaid and Azhar Rashid, 'Oil and Gas Potentials of Central Asian Republics and Relations with Pakistan', *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 30 No. 1, January-June 2015, pp. 132, 136, 138.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> The discussion of Sri Lanka's approaches to regionalism till the 1990s contained in this section is indebted to V.L.B. Mendis, *Bilateral and Multilateral Factors in Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy*, Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS) Research Monograph No. 1/97, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike National Memorial Foundation, Colombo, 1997; and Gamini Navaratne, *The Chinese Connexion: A Study of Sri Lanka-China Relations in the Modern Period*, Sandesa News Agency, Colombo, 1976.

<sup>13</sup> Jamshed Ayaz Khan, op cit, pp. 39-53.

<sup>14</sup> An explanatory note is in order here with regard to Pakistan's use of the term 'East Asia'. In its 'Vision East Asia' Pakistan uses the term 'East Asia' to denote Southeast and Northeast Asia. However, traditionally 'East Asia' encompasses the sovereign states of the People's Republic of China, Japan, South Korea and North Korea. While the sovereign states of Southeast Asia are the 10 countries that

make-up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus East Timor, the sovereign states that comprise Northeast Asia are the above mentioned East Asian states plus Russia. Thus the use of the term 'East Asia' in Pakistan's 'Vision East Asia' differs from the traditional use of the term 'East Asia'.

<sup>15</sup> Ahmad Rashid Malik, op cit.

<sup>16</sup> Jamshed Ayaz Khan, op cit.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> The characterisation of the ocean as a 'transport surface' is indebted to Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Jamshed Ayaz Khan, op cit.

## **Part III**

### **Economic Dimensions**



## 6 Economic Relations: A Sri Lankan Perspective

*Bhagya Senaratne*

### Introduction

Both Pakistan and Sri Lanka have very vibrant political and military relations. Sri Lanka also has excellent cultural and social relations with the former, which are longstanding and have withstood the test of time. The same cannot be said about the economic relations between the two countries. It is important for two sovereign states to improve their economic relations as it is one of the key pillars – along with defence and culture – on which bilateral relations between states are conducted. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand the reasons for the lacklustre performance in trade and industry relations between these two South Asian states.

Despite the present scenario, trade relations between Sri Lanka and Pakistan had been robust for centuries in contrast to cooperation in other spheres of economic activity.<sup>1</sup> Sri Lanka – then Ceylon – had established solid trade relations with Pakistan via the Arab traders, well before Western colonisers came into the region.<sup>2</sup> So much so that when the Portuguese came to the island in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century the trade was monopolised by Muslims, Arabs and Persians.<sup>3</sup>

Three years after establishing formal diplomatic relations with Pakistan, the “two countries signed a Trade Agreement to last from July 1951 to December 1952.”<sup>4</sup> This resulted in Pakistan’s exports to Ceylon reaching Rs. 31 million in 1951, while in 1952, Ceylon’s exports to Pakistan reached an all-time high of Rs. 40 million.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter, neither party to this Trade Agreement made an effort to renew it at its expiration. And it was only in 1955, when a new Trade Agreement with MFN treatment was negotiated that trade between the two states improved.

Traditional exports from Sri Lanka to Pakistan include “coconut oil, rubber, copra, tea, sea shells, desiccated coconut, fresh coconuts,

coir fibre, natural graphite, citronella oil, croton seed and spices in that order of importance<sup>76</sup>. Further, in the past, Sri Lanka had shipped small quantities of cocoa beans, cinnamon bark, cinnamon leaf oil, coir yarn and ropes to Pakistan. As of 1962, Sri Lanka had also supplied coconut seedlings and tea seeds to Pakistan. Pakistani exports to Sri Lanka consisted mainly of “dried fish, paper, pulses, cotton fabrics and piece goods, bone meal, coriander seed, ... fish manure, cotton yarn and twist, medicinal and pharmaceutical products, medicinal roots and herbs, horn and hoof meal, unrefined sugar (jaggery), rosin, in that order of importance<sup>77</sup>. Further, Pakistan has shipped small quantities of dried fruit such as raisins, various seeds such as castor, medicines and paper board. This indicates the basket of goods initially traded among the two countries. Further discussion in this chapter will illustrate that over the decades, the basket of goods has not altered significantly.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka are located in the South Asian region with easy access to the Indian Ocean. Pakistan has access to this vast ocean region on the South, whilst Sri Lanka has access to it as an island. Since its inception, both countries have been members of SAARC. According to Taneja, “Total informal trade in the South Asian region is about US \$ 3 billion, which is almost double the formal trade in the region.”<sup>8</sup> Disparities in trade policies such as the presence of NTB in the form of quantitative restrictions have increased informal trade in the region.<sup>9</sup> Modern trade relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka too have been driven mainly through informal trade in contrast to formal trade<sup>10</sup> Traders further opt for informal trade due to restrictions, which occur through institutional, administrative, government rules and regulations etc. This holds true for trade relations between the two countries as traders have resorted to other mechanisms to conduct their transactions. Bilateral economic relations between the two countries have been significant with Pakistan being Sri Lanka’s second largest trading partner in the South Asian region with a volume of US \$ 325 million a year being traded in contrast to trade relations with India – Sri Lanka’s largest trading partner in the region – which stands at an annual US \$ 4.7 billion.<sup>11</sup> The relations between the two states are further illustrated by Sri Lanka being the first country to sign an FTA with Pakistan in 2002, which led to the solidification of the bilateral relations in the economic sphere.



## **The FTA and its Current Position**

The FTA between the two South Asian nations is currently celebrating a little over a decade in operation since its implementation on June 12, 2005. However, the economic relations between the two countries have not shown great progress as was envisioned by inking this bilateral agreement, which was the first of its kind for Pakistan. This leads to questions such as whether there are problems with the FTA, and if so, where and why the two countries are not attempting to reap the benefits that can be derived by taking advantage of this agreement. It also leads to the question whether the individuals who are to drive trade and economic relations between the two countries are not spirited in their tasks and not enabling the full implementation of the FTA. Another factor that could be highlighted at the outset is whether the citizens and the business communities of the two countries are ignorant of the FTA and the benefits that could be derived, thereof.<sup>12</sup>

Sri Lanka has been able to obtain technical assistance from Pakistan in a wide range of fields including university education, commercial banking, central banking, railways, postal and telecommunications. It has also been able to utilise the US \$ 10 million LoC extended by Pakistan to import “genetic materials by the Department of Animal Production and Health and to import merchandise by the STC General Trading Company”.<sup>13</sup> Agreeing to provide assistance in the above fields demonstrate the diversity of the economic relations between the two countries and also the immense potential it holds for the future. The LoC towards Sri Lanka was later increased, displaying the level of confidence between the two countries. The MoU of the credit line for US \$ 200 million was among the three MoUs signed between the two countries during President Mahinda Rajapaksa’s official visit to Pakistan, on the invitation of President Asif Ali Zardari in February 2012.<sup>14</sup> This increase also showcases that the Government of Pakistan is keen on continuing and even furthering its trade relations with Sri Lanka.

While noting that the bilateral economic potential between the two countries has not been achieved, President Maithripala Sirisena, during his visit to Pakistan in April 2015, agreed to improve economic cooperation within the existing mechanisms of the JEC and the

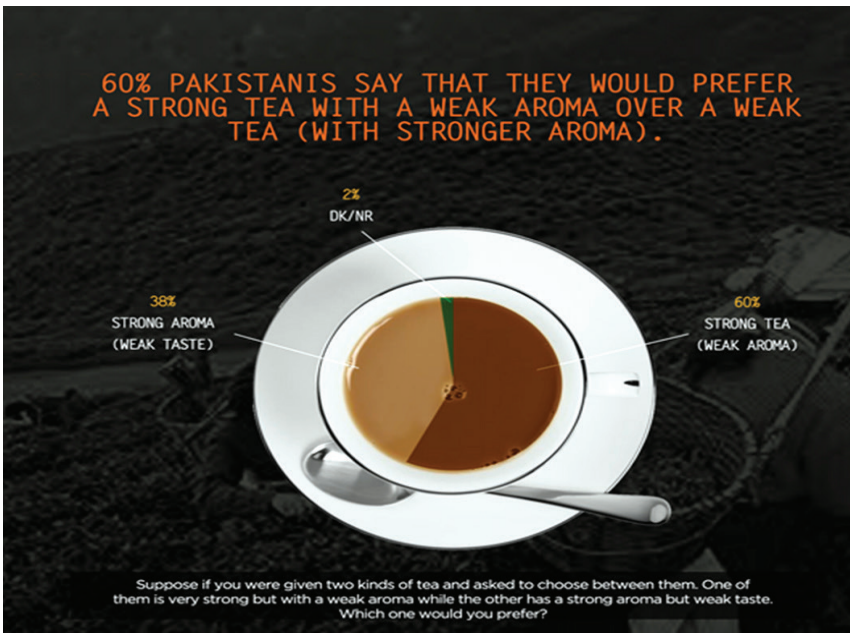
Working Groups on trade in goods, investment, auto sector and customs cooperation. The Sri Lankan President invited “Pakistan investments to Sri Lanka particularly in the sectors of Pharmaceuticals and Medical devices, Cement, Sugar, IT and Tourism,”<sup>15</sup> which resulted in Prime Minister Sharif agreeing to send a team of investors to explore opportunities in the pharmaceuticals, cement and sugar sectors. Discussions were also held on the US \$ 200 million credit line offered by Pakistan to Sri Lanka and measures to finalise its disbursement.

During the Pakistani Prime Minister’s visit to Colombo, both President Sirisena and Prime Minister Sharif agreed that the current level of trade between the two countries does not reflect the actual potential, and therefore, set to achieve a target of US \$ 1 billion trade within the next two to three years.<sup>16</sup> In the meantime, the two leaders agreed that they would identify issues, challenges and strategies to reap the benefits of the existing potential in this area of cooperation. The two leaders also discussed the investment potential Pakistan has in Sri Lanka in the fields of sugar, cement, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and infrastructure development, while also agreeing that Sri Lanka will be able to assist Pakistan in addressing the severe power shortage in the country with Sri Lankan investment. In addition to the discussions on the potential investment capacity, the two leaders witnessed the signing of eight bilateral instruments in the fields of health, science and technology, trade, statistics, gem and jewellery, money laundering and terrorism financing, and culture, while the two Prime Ministers witnessed the signing of eight MoUs on the promotion of Trade and Investment and the establishment of Joint Ventures in the areas of Fishing, Shipping, Power Generation, Cement etc., among the private establishments of the two countries.

At the very outset, when the FTA between the two countries was signed, “Pakistan listed 206 products as immediate zero-duty concession products, Sri Lanka listed 102 products to the zero-duty list.”<sup>17</sup> Further the agreement took into consideration the market sizes of the two countries and gave further concessions to Sri Lanka. This was in terms of the number of items on the negative list and schedules to phase out duties. In the 1980s, Sri Lankan officials had once commented that “the Pakistan trade delegations always acted in

a friendly manner and never in their talk did they put forward issues that would have caused a set-back to the discussions.”<sup>18</sup> Instances such as this showcase that Pakistanis have understood Sri Lanka’s situation in world dynamics and were, therefore, very understanding when engaging in discussions and business with Sri Lankans.

Pakistan was a prominent destination for exports of Ceylon Tea. However, Sri Lankan tea exports to this market were adversely affected due to reasons such as the high price of the Sri Lankan tea, the exports from Kenya etc. The CTC<sup>19</sup> method followed by the Kenyan tea growers was more suited to the Pakistani palette than that of the tea produced in Sri Lanka following the orthodox method.<sup>20</sup> This was further demonstrated by a recent survey carried out by the Gilani Research Foundation and Gallup Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> While the FTA covers a majority of the Sri Lankan exports, it does not cover vital exports from Sri Lanka such as tea.<sup>22</sup> While, there is a TRQ of 10,000 metric tonnes (MT) of tea duty free, Sri Lanka has not maximised on this as tea exports have declined over time from 2000 tonnes in 2003 to 500 tonnes by 2013.<sup>23</sup> Further, Sri Lanka’s high costs too do not appear to favour the Pakistani market.<sup>24</sup>



Source: Gilani Research Foundation

In addition to the TRQ on tea, Pakistan granted Sri Lanka “a TRQ of 1,200 metric tons per annum for betel leaves at a preferential margin of 35%.”<sup>25</sup> In return, Sri Lanka granted Pakistan TRQs for 6,000 metric tonnes of long-grade Basmati rice and 1,000 metric tons of potatoes per annum on duty free basis under the FTA.

Currently, Sri Lankan businessmen, flying frequently to Pakistan, can apply for visa on arrival. Whereas, those travelling for trade negotiations and discussions have to apply for visa prior to their departure.<sup>26</sup> This is encouraging for our businessmen as they can fly directly to Pakistan with the required documentation to engage in their business. The High Commissioner of Pakistan also stated that the High Commission gives utmost priority to visa applications that come for business purposes.<sup>27</sup>

Many decades later Sri Lanka’s basket of goods has still not varied and it is still exporting much of the same items such as betel leaves, spices, natural rubber, fresh coconut nuts, bulk tea, etc. that were exported as formal trade commenced after independence. 229 exporters from Sri Lanka exported 238 products to Pakistan in 2005 and this increased to 276 exporters exporting 374 products in 2014.<sup>28</sup>

### **Sri Lanka’s Major Export Products to Pakistan (Value: US \$ 000)**

No	Product	2012	2013	2014
1	Coconut Kernel Products	12,243	11,448	16,384
2	Other Export Crops	5,149	14,016	13,261
3	Wooden Products	8,269	9,774	7,755
4	Electronic Products, Parts & Machinery	526	668	5,347
5	Natural Rubber	16,183	11,944	4,834
6	Food, Feed, Beverages & Tobacco	1,268	1,359	3,498
7	Rubber Finished Products	2,390	2,570	3,193
8	Spices	7,539	17,188	3,041
9	Paper & Paper Products	1,805	1,757	2,761
10	Other Textile Articles	1,861	1,717	2,583
11	Chemicals & Plastic Products	1,050	2,058	2,477
12	Woven Fabrics	2,364	1,267	1,708
13	Coconut Shell Products	1,937	1,617	1,706
14	Base Metal Products	669	477	1,463
15	Apparel	839	1,032	1,248

16	Coconut Fiber	900	745	1,015
17	Fruits	752	110	549
18	Non - Metallic Mineral Products	825	612	546
19	Tea Packets	264	168	330
20	Tea in Bulk	15,456	2,203	201
21	Others	448	394	323
	<b>Total :</b>	<b>82,736</b>	<b>83,123</b>	<b>74,223</b>

**Source:** EDB Pakistan Market Profile, 2016, page 4.

This demonstrates that even a decade later, Sri Lankan businessmen have not understood the Pakistani market, to take advantage of its potential. As shown in the table below, this lack of product diversification has led to the balance of trade between the two countries being heavily in favour of Pakistan.

#### **Bilateral Trade between Sri Lanka and Pakistan (Value: US \$ 000)**

Year	Total Trade	SL Exports to Pakistan	SL Imports from Pakistan	Balance of Trade
2010	344,295	63,014	281,281	-218,267
2011	409,744	75,234	334,510	-259,276
2012	432,922	82,736	350,186	-267,450
2013	464,535	83,123	381,412	-298,289
2014	353,779	74,223	279,556	-205,333

**Source:** EDB Pakistan Market Profile, 2016, page 4.

Taking the above into consideration, Sri Lanka needs to explore more avenues to expand its trade relations with Pakistan. The following section will thus discuss the avenues Sri Lanka can pursue to tilt the balance of trade in favour of the island.

#### **Future Prospects**

Sri Lanka has immense potential in working with Pakistan to develop not only the bilateral trade relations, but also the local economy which spreads across several key areas. During President Sirisena's visit to Pakistan in 2015, the leaders of the two countries agreed to further cooperate in areas inclusive of, but not limited to shipping and socio-economic development and education.<sup>29</sup> The JEC

between the two countries is also “working on modalities for a new and unconventional phase of economic cooperation marked by barter trade, currency exchanges and banking interchanges.”<sup>30</sup> In addition, the two countries have also agreed to cooperate with each other on trade and investment promotion, air services, port and shipping, tourism and science and technology, which is encouraging as there is immense potential in these fields and many others for the two countries to benefit from. Further, it is important for both countries to develop their infrastructure facilities, telecommunication and banking and finance sectors to increase trade interactions between the countries.<sup>31</sup>

There is great potential for Sri Lankan businesses as well as for investment in Pakistan. Increased demands in the power sector in Pakistan have created considerable investment opportunities. With an annual increase of approximately 2% in the Pakistani population, the country of approximately 190 million is striving to achieve self-sufficiency in energy,<sup>32</sup> thus, encouraging potential investors.<sup>33</sup> It is also encouraging to note that Prime Minister Sharif himself pointed out the potential in this area, during his visit to Colombo in early 2016. During this visit, President Sirisena briefed the visiting Prime Minister on the “Economic, Industrial, and Technical Development Zones in different parts of the Island, and the Megapolis development plan”<sup>34</sup> towards which Pakistani investors from the cement and infrastructure development industries could invest in. In addition, a further MoU was signed between the Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design and the Sri Lankan Gems and Jewellery Training and Research Institute to train Pakistani students in the art of cutting and polishing gems.<sup>35</sup> This is a very important agreement as many Pakistani students will benefit from this expertise. Pakistan is home to many exquisite gems yet they are not proficient in the art of gemcutting or lapidary to world standards. The exceptional skills Sri Lankans have in this regard would be highly invaluable in training the Pakistanis as well as opening centres to cut and polish the precious stones on behalf of the Pakistani gem traders. Investment in areas such as power and energy, construction and infrastructure development and lapidary would be an impetus in reaching the ambitious target of US \$ 1 billion.

There are several ways in which Sri Lanka can regain the Pakistani market for tea, for instance, by marketing varieties of Sri Lankan

tea that would be suitable to the Pakistan palette, such as the low grown teas. Low country teas, which are grown at an elevation below 2000 feet are full-bodied, thereby, producing a good colour and strength, which enables it to be drunk with milk.<sup>36</sup> It is common knowledge that the teas produced in the low grown areas are popular in Western Asia, Middle Eastern countries, CIS countries and the BRICS countries.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, Sri Lanka should continue to export the aroma rich teas to the Pakistani market, as there is a niche market,<sup>38</sup> which appreciates the unique fragrance of the upcountry teas, which are grown at an elevation above 4,000 feet. Next, the tea exporters can make use of the maximum TRQ of 10,000 MT allotted for tea and try to export as much tea as it can in both varieties of tea mentioned above. Should Sri Lanka do this, it can enjoy the arrangements being made by the Pakistani Government to provide shelf space for tea in 30 department stores as mentioned by the Pakistani High Commissioner.<sup>39</sup> More importantly, a proper promotion campaign needs to be designed to ensure that the Pakistani citizens are aware of the different types of Sri Lankan tea, its brewing methods,<sup>40</sup> etc., to enjoy a good cup of tea. Creating awareness via a thoughtful marketing campaign will go a long way in promoting the Ceylon Tea<sup>41</sup> brand. Sri Lankan tea will not be able to make an impact among the Pakistani citizens unless attention is drawn to the brand and to the above-mentioned facts on the varieties and brewing methods.

As the situation in Pakistan is gradually improving, the Sri Lankan hospitality industry has great potential in investing in the country. The hospitality industry is not a strong suit for the former, therefore, with the experience and the prestige the Sri Lankan industry has, it can effortlessly profit from investing in the construction of accommodation facilities. This potential is especially great in Taxila, which was once the capital of the Gandhara region, where a significant number of Buddhist heritage sites such as the Dharmarajika Stupa and the Taxila University are located. Currently, this area does not have proper accommodation and lodging facilities for potential pilgrims and tourists. Closely related to the hospitality industry is tourism. As Pakistan is home to a “wide array of tourist attractions from beaches to mountains, deserts to snow and historical sites,”<sup>42</sup> it can benefit greatly by partnering with Sri Lankan companies to not only develop

the tourist attractions, but to promote tourism in the country by encouraging Sri Lankans to visit.<sup>43</sup>

Further, as Sri Lanka is gaining popularity among Pakistanis as a favoured destination, the promotion of tourism could be two-way, by encouraging visits from citizens of each country to the other. To this end, civil aviation links between the countries need to be enhanced. Sri Lanka's national carrier SriLankan Airlines is currently flying daily to Karachi and thrice weekly to Lahore.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, one must opt for connecting flights to reach the capital city of Islamabad and other major cities in Pakistan. Initiating flights especially between Islamabad and Colombo is something that needs to be rectified immediately. This would further serve the tourist purposes as pilgrims travelling to Taxila could travel through Islamabad.<sup>45</sup> Increasing the frequency of flights between the two countries was among the topics discussed during President Maithripala Sirisena's visit to Pakistan, as it would be a motivation to increase the trade and economic relations between the two countries.<sup>46</sup> Encouraging cruise liners to operate the 1531 nautical mile (nm) sea route between Karachi and Colombo is another initiative, the two countries can work on. As connecting the two countries by sea is another lucrative measure for the industry as there is an increased trend in the cruise culture.

According to de Silva, Sri Lanka continues to be the leading supplier of coconuts.<sup>47</sup> However, there is further potential for Sri Lanka in exporting coconuts and coconut based products such as hair oil, coconut oil, body lotions etc. to Pakistan. This is due to the conscientiousness of the consumer towards their health.<sup>48</sup> This also leads to business opportunities that lie in exporting Ayurvedic products. Sri Lanka also has the ability to increase its traditional exports of copra and desiccated coconut to Pakistan. While venturing into areas of this nature will be highly lucrative for business people, it will also help tilt the balance of trade, which is currently favouring Pakistan.

The US \$ 46 billion CPEC is another area Sri Lanka can greatly benefit from. Ultimately, connecting the Pakistani port city of Gwadar to China's Xinjing, via a network of highways and railways, this project will provide Sri Lanka the shortest possible route not only to China, but to the entire Central Asian region. This will enable



Sri Lanka to reduce costs incurred on transportation and other duties, when sending goods through Iran, Turkey etc. This will encourage better sea route connectivity between Colombo and Gwadar enabling bulkier supplies to navigate the seas in between. As much as Pakistan is geopolitically important for Sri Lanka to access the northern landlocked countries, the latter is equally beneficial for the former in accessing East Asian and Middle Eastern markets. One of the key reasons as to why Pakistani IT companies are keen on investing in Sri Lanka is to leverage on this potential.<sup>49</sup> Taking the state-level discussions from both 2015 and 2016 forward, pharmaceutical companies from Pakistan too have begun to take an interest in investing in Sri Lanka. To this end, a Pakistani company will soon establish itself in Sri Lanka to manufacture pharmaceuticals.<sup>50</sup> The establishment of such companies in Sri Lanka will help Pakistani businesses capture markets they have not been able to capture before, due to Sri Lanka's central positioning and great rapport with all countries.

Economic cooperation between the two countries has been inadequate despite the close relations in other areas. According to de Silva,

*[B]oth governments have expressed the desire to increase economic co-operation, with proposals for joint ventures in agri-business, including seafood processing and sugar production, value-added textile products and garment, tourism, ship breaking and ship repairing, dehydration, preservation and canning of fruits and vegetables, dairy and livestock, electronic sector and metal fabrication and light engineering.<sup>51</sup>*

Sri Lanka produces about 153,000 MTs of natural rubber annually, and at present, ranks among the world's top ten largest producers.<sup>52</sup> As Sri Lanka is also ranked as the seventh largest exporter in natural rubber, it has further potential for investment by undertaking JVs in rubber, due to its high-quality production. Currently, by processing raw rubber, Sri Lankan rubber and rubber product manufacturers produce a wide range of value-added rubber and rubber based products which range from "extrusion products such as rubber bands, beadings[;] latex products such as medical, industrial and household gloves[;] industrial products such as hoses, auto parts[;] industrial

components, tyres, tubes, automotive and aviation tyres and general rubber products such as floor mats, carpets, sports goods, footwear, hot water bottles and related components.”<sup>53</sup>

In addition to these value-added products, Sri Lanka has the possibility of working with Pakistani businesses to increase value-addition on its rubber and produce far greater a variety of products. With a developing automobile industry and an industry in building defence equipment in Pakistan, Sri Lankan businesses will benefit greatly from such a venture in rubber. Further, commissioning garment factories in Pakistan will be lucrative for the Sri Lankan textile industry. Pakistan has a reputation for producing superior quality cotton yarn, which Sri Lanka’s world-renowned apparel industry can benefit from, by sourcing in their garment and textiles. This joint venture will ensure the production of premium quality clothes to the world as Pakistan is known to export “textiles worth US \$ 12.6 million annually.”<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the above-mentioned two avenues are very profitable projects Sri Lankan business enterprises can embark on. Among other ventures Pakistan has initiated in Sri Lanka, it has assisted Sri Lanka uplift its handloom industry in 2014 by providing handlooms and other equipment worth Rs. 100,000 each to 70 handloom operators in the textile village of Kottala-Meerigama.<sup>55</sup> The material produced from these too can be channelled through Pakistan to other prospective markets.

Furthermore, it needs to be understood that governments are merely facilitators of trade and economic relations and it is the private sector that needs to play a more crucial role as they are the engines for growth.<sup>56</sup> The reluctance shown by the Sri Lankan private sector to invest and engage in bilateral trade could largely be due to the negative impression it has on Pakistan’s political and economic situation.<sup>57</sup> This is further highlighted by the “lack of awareness of each other’s potential due to insufficient exchange of business delegations”<sup>58</sup> as well as the negativity of the countries portrayed via media. Sri Lanka is now featured better in terms of media coverage, yet Pakistan is still suffering from negative reportage. Portraying their respective countries in a better light is an area both governments need to work on, to ensure more businesses enter respective countries. This was illustrated by the business community airing that they lack knowledge

on the potential Sri Lankan entrepreneurs and businesses have in Pakistan at the seminar titled 'Bilateral Trade between Sri Lanka and Pakistan' organised by the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka; a sentiment further articulated by analysts, who state that the current political and security situation makes Pakistan less attractive for investors.<sup>59</sup>

To this end, both countries need to organise single country exhibitions such as the Pakistan Single Country Exhibitions 2016 and 2017. The first Pakistan Single Country Exhibition was organised to coincide with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Sri Lanka in January 2016.<sup>60</sup> Exhibitions such as these assist commercial ties between countries and inviting businesses of such countries to tap into the growth potential of each other's economies, which leads to economies which enjoy preferential trade access. According to Prime Minister Sharif, "...the exhibition will provide opportunities for businessmen in both countries to create a business network and a value chain and joint ventures."<sup>61</sup> It will also help expand the bilateral trade relations between the two countries. Businessmen from both countries will be keen on investing and engaging in trade activities with the other country with the exposure they get about the opportunities they have in the other country. Sri Lanka too should make an earnest effort to organise single country exhibitions in Pakistan to facilitate bilateral trade and investment. To this end, Sri Lanka and Pakistan should strive to organise frequent single country exhibitions as they are of extreme importance to improve bilateral trade relations.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Sri Lanka has not pursued the opportunities presented via the Pakistan–Sri Lanka FTA. Sri Lankan businessmen and entrepreneurs are not sufficiently aware of the potential business opportunities in Pakistan such as in the power and energy sector, gem and jewellery industry and the hospitality and tourism industry to name a few. Due to the ignorance on the part of local businessmen, Sri Lanka has lost out on these opportunities in Pakistan. Thus, it is recommended that the agencies that are working towards establishing and cementing better economic ties between the two countries showcase the potential and encourage more exports and investment from Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka also has an excellent opportunity to

embark on joint ventures with Pakistani counterparts to manufacture high-quality products such as textiles and rubber based products, which can be exported to the world. Therefore, it is observed that by working together by diversifying their range of products, Sri Lanka and Pakistan can enjoy more riches than working alone and improve the quality of their citizens' lives.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Sabiha Hasan, “Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations,” *Pakistan Horizon*, 38 (1985): 119.

<sup>2</sup> Hafeez-ur-Rahman Khan, “Ceylon—Pakistan’s Valued Neighbour,” *Pakistan Horizon*, 15 (1962): 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Khan, “Ceylon—Pakistan’s Valued Neighbour,” 60.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Khan, 61.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Nisha Taneja, “Informal Trade in the SAARC Region: Implications for FTAs,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39 (2004): 5368 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4415918>

<sup>9</sup> Taneja, “Informal Trade,” 5369.

<sup>10</sup> This was highlighted by Pakistan’s Minister □ for

<sup>11</sup> Shihar Aneez and Ranga Sirilal, “Sri Lanka, Pakistan to include services in trade pact,” *Reuters*, January 5, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/sri-lanka-pakistan-sharif-idUSL3N14P38Z20160105> (Accessed February 23, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> In 2007, Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Pakistan from 2007 to 2009, Dr. W. B. Dorakumbura, observed “...that most of the people were ignorant of the benefit of mutual trade and the two Governments should try to educate them. He said Sri Lankan Government was already informing its people about it”

As quoted by Sajjad Malik, “Pakistan has great potential for religio-cultural tourism - Sri Lankan HC,” *Daily Times*.

Cited in *Daily News* on September 27, 2007, <http://archives.dailynews.lk/2001/pix/PrintPage.asp?REF=/2007/09/25/news22.asp> (Accessed May 06, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> “Joint Trade and Economic Cooperation”, *Department of Commerce*, [http://www.doc.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=77&lang=en](http://www.doc.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=77&lang=en) (Accessed November 19, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> “Lanka and Pakistan ink US\$200 million credit line,” *Sunday Times*, February 12, 2012, [http://www.sundaytimes.lk/120212/News/nws\\_12.html](http://www.sundaytimes.lk/120212/News/nws_12.html) (Accessed May 06, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> “President Returns after Successful State visit to Pakistan,” *President of Sri Lanka*,

<http://www.president.gov.lk/news/president-returns-after-successful-state-visit-to-pakistan/>.

<sup>16</sup> “Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif concludes official visit to Sri Lanka,” *The Official Government News Portal of Sri Lanka*, January 7, 2016, <http://www.news.lk/news/business/item/11652-pakistan-pm-nawaz-sharif-concludes-official-visit-to-sri-lanka>

<sup>17</sup> From *Sri Lanka Export Development Board*’s internal report titled “Sri Lanka – Pakistan Trade” 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Jeffrey Hashim, "Ceylon News Letter," *Dawn*, March 12, 1983. As cited by Hasan, "Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations," 121.

<sup>19</sup> Cut, Tear and Curl (CTC) is an unorthodox method of producing tea. Sri Lanka produces a limited quantity of tea via this method.

"Tea from Sri Lanka," a brochure printed by the *Sri Lanka Export Development Board*, 04.

<sup>20</sup> Manel de Silva, "Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations: Economic Dimension," *Proceedings of the One-Day Seminar on Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations*, (Islamabad: Institute of Strategic Studies, 2004), 82.

<sup>21</sup> According to a Gilani Research Foundation Survey carried out by Gallup Pakistan, 60% Pakistanis say that they would prefer strong tea with a weak aroma than tea that has a strong aroma but weak taste. May 05, 2016, <http://www.gilanifoundation.com/> (Accessed May 05, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> Saman Kelegama, "Pakistan-Sri Lanka FTA: A brief look at the first decade of operation," *Daily FT*, January 04, 2016, <http://www.ft.lk/article/515545/Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-FTA--A-brief-look-at-the-first-decade-of-operation> (Accessed February 29, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Saman Kelegama, "Pakistan-Sri Lanka FTA: A brief look at the first decade of operation."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

A point reiterated by Counsellor, High Commission of Pakistan, Mr. Hasan Zaigham at a discussion organised by the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) titled "Bilateral Trade between Sri Lanka & Pakistan" on April 28, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, "FTA could create 'win-win' situation for Pakistan and Lanka," *Daily News*, February 11, 2005, <http://archives.dailynews.lk/2005/02/11/fea01.html>. (Accessed May 11, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> "Visa Guidelines," *High Commission of Pakistan, Colombo, Sri Lanka*, <http://www.pakistanhc.lk/visa-requirements/> (Accessed on May 13, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> High Commissioner of Pakistan to Sri Lanka, H. E. Major General (R) Syed Shakeel Hussain at the discussion titled "Bilateral Trade between Sri Lanka & Pakistan" on April 28, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Sri Lanka Customs, as cited in *Sri Lanka Export Development Board's* internal report titled "Sri Lanka – Pakistan Trade" 2014.

<sup>29</sup> "New Promises, New Hopes," *Asian Mirror*, April 16, 2015, <http://www.asianmirror.lk/opinion/item/8197-new-promises-new-hopes> (Accessed May 06, 2016).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Nitai Chandra Nag, "Introduction," *Economic Integration in South Asia: Issues and Pathways*, (Pearson Education India, 2012), xxix [https://books.google.lk/s?id=IJntRlguQWkC&pg=PA221&lpg=PA221&dq=informal+and+formal+trade+between+sri+lanka+and+pakistan&source=bl&ots=Vg91uvy5oR&sig=TyIw343Ohm1R6GDU\\_4SEM4n6IEI&hl=si&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi0j-21qdnMAhXCq48KHUyXBIYQ6AEIGjAA#v=onepage&q=informal%20and%20formal%20trade%20between%20sri%20lanka%20and%20pakistan&f=false](https://books.google.lk/s?id=IJntRlguQWkC&pg=PA221&lpg=PA221&dq=informal+and+formal+trade+between+sri+lanka+and+pakistan&source=bl&ots=Vg91uvy5oR&sig=TyIw343Ohm1R6GDU_4SEM4n6IEI&hl=si&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi0j-21qdnMAhXCq48KHUyXBIYQ6AEIGjAA#v=onepage&q=informal%20and%20formal%20trade%20between%20sri%20lanka%20and%20pakistan&f=false).

<sup>32</sup> “Road to Self Reliance: PPIB approved two 330 MW Projects based at Thar Coal,” *Private Power & Investment Board*, May 03, 2016, <http://ppib.gov.pk/105.htm> (Accessed May 06, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> High Commissioner of Pakistan to Sri Lanka, H. E. Major General (R) Syed Shakeel Hussain and Counsellor, Mr. Hasan Zaigham whilst explaining the investment opportunities for Sri Lanka in the Pakistani energy sector, encouraged investment in the same at a discussion organised by the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) titled “Bilateral Trade between Sri Lanka & Pakistan” on April 28, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> “Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif.”

<sup>35</sup> Peer Muhammad, “Pakistan, Sri Lanka to sign MoUs for trade and training,” *The Express Tribune*, January 2, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1020580/pakistan-sri-lanka-to-sign-mous-for-trade-and-training/> (Accessed May 11, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> “Pure Ceylon Tea,” <http://www.srilankabusiness.com/tea/> (Accessed December 05, 2015).

<sup>37</sup> “Tea from Sri Lanka,” 05.

<sup>38</sup> A point floated by Counsellor, High Commission of Pakistan, Mr. Hasan Zaigham at a discussion organised by the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) titled “Bilateral Trade between Sri Lanka & Pakistan” on April 28, 2016.

<sup>39</sup> High Commissioner of Pakistan to Sri Lanka, H. E. Major General (R) Syed Shakeel Hussain at the discussion titled “Bilateral Trade between Sri Lanka & Pakistan” on April 28, 2016. High Commissioner also stated that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is personally interested and taking up this matter as he is keen on increasing Sri Lankan tea imports to Pakistan.

<sup>40</sup> “The cooking method of tea by the mass consumer as opposed to the brewing method of the Ceylon tea also assisted the increase in Kenyan tea imports, as the CTC teas with the strong colouring was more suitable for boiling with water.” De Silva, “Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations,” 82.

<sup>41</sup> The name ‘Ceylon Tea’ and the famous Lion logo that goes with it indicates the tea grown, manufactured and packed entirely in Sri Lanka conforming to strict quality standards laid down and administered by the Sri Lanka Tea Board. “Why Pure Ceylon Tea,” <http://www.srilankabusiness.com/tea/why-pure-ceylon-tea.html> (Accessed on December 05, 2015).

Ceylon Tea is the cleanest tea in the world in terms of pesticide residues, a fact confirmed by the ISO Technical Committee. Sri Lanka was also the first to achieve the “Ozone Friendly Tea” label recognised under the Montreal Protocol Treaty and is the proud owner of the first Ethical Tea Brand of the World recognised by the United Nations Global Compact.

“Pure Ceylon Tea.”

<sup>42</sup> De Silva, “Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations,” 86.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *The Official Government News Portal of Sri Lanka*, “SriLankan Airlines commences services to Lahore”, September 27, 2016, <http://www.news.lk/news/world/item/14571-srilanka-airlines-commences-services-to-lahore> (Accessed on December 20, 2016).

*Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations: A Story of Friendship*

<sup>45</sup> Taxila is roughly 40 kms or an hour's drive on the highway from the capital city of Islamabad.

<sup>46</sup> "President Returns."

<sup>47</sup> De Silva, "Pakistan – Sri Lanka Relations," 82.

<sup>48</sup> Mr. Hasan Zaigham.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> De Silva, 83.

Also noted in "Lanka-Pakistan FTA a boost for investments," *High Commission of Sri Lanka in Pakistan*, [http://www.slhcpakistan.org/Lanka-Pakistan\\_FTA\\_a%20boost%20for%20investments.html](http://www.slhcpakistan.org/Lanka-Pakistan_FTA_a%20boost%20for%20investments.html) (Accessed February 11, 2016).

<sup>52</sup> "Rubber & Rubber-based Products," *Sri Lanka Export Development Board*, <http://www.srilankabusiness.com/rubber/> (Accessed May 07, 2016).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> "Pakistan joins effort to revive SL handloom textile industry," *Daily FT*, February 08, 2014, <http://www.ft.lk/2014/02/08/pakistan-joins-effort-to-revive-sl-handloom-textile-industry/> (Accessed on May 13, 2016).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> De Silva, 85.

<sup>57</sup> De Silva, 82. A point reiterated by the Sri Lankan business community.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Shihar Aneez and Ranga Sirilal, "Sri Lanka, Pakistan."

<sup>60</sup> Ishara Mudugamuwa, "Pakistan Single Country Exhibition 2016 unveiled," *Daily News*, January 6, 2016 <http://www.dailynews.lk/?q=2016/01/06/business/pakistan-single-country-exhibition-2016-unveiled> (Accessed on May 11, 2016).

<sup>61</sup> "Pakistan joins effort."



# 7 Economic Outlook of Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations

*Dr. Shaheen Akhtar*

## Introduction

Pakistan and Sri Lanka have traditionally enjoyed cordial relations rooted in strong bonds of culture and history. They have maintained strong political ties and extended support to each other in times of crises. Pakistan provided military assistance to Sri Lanka during fight against Tamil Tiger insurgents that ended in 2009, while Sri Lanka provided overflight rights to Pakistani planes in the 1971 crisis. They also have shared perceptions on important regional and international issues. As members of SAARC, both countries have supported regional cooperation and they made efforts towards creation of an environment of peace and stability in the region. However, they have been unable to fully realise their economic and trade potential.

To step up economic ties, Pakistan and Sri Lanka signed an FTA in August 2002, which became operational in June 2005. Under the bilateral FTA, both sides agreed to establish a Free Trade Area through elimination of tariffs on the movement of goods and services. Signing of FTA was described as 'historic' and it opened a new chapter of closer economic and trade relationship between the two countries. There has been a significant increase in the volume of trade between the two countries after the signing of this agreement; it increased from US \$ 200 million in 2004-05 to over US \$ 724 million in 2014-15. Pakistan also emerged as the second largest trading partner of Sri Lanka after India within the South Asian region. But the present volume of trade does not reflect the true potential that exists between the two countries.

Further, trade balance continues to be in Pakistan's favour as imports from Sri Lanka could not grow as was anticipated. In the last few years, both sides have expressed deep interest to expand and diversify their economic ties and take the bilateral trade to

US \$ 1-2 billion, but not much headway is being made in this regard. The study examines the performance of FTA and looks into major snags resulting in small volume of bilateral trade and limited economic interaction between the two countries. It looks into drivers of growth of economic ties between the two countries and argues that there exists vast untapped bilateral trade potential in items with favourable CAGR<sup>1</sup> values that could be explored and utilised. Further, economic cooperation can be strengthened by effectively implementing the existing FTA and expanding its scope involving joint investments in collaborative projects in Sri Lanka in the areas such as cement, sugar, dairy production, chemical plants, textiles, tourism and pharmaceuticals.

### **Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (PSFTA)**

Historically, bilateral trade flows (as well as investment flows between the two countries) have been marginal. In 1984, both countries signed a bilateral trade agreement, but the trade volume over the years remained quite low. The decade of 1980s indicated a positive trade balance for Sri Lanka, but in the 1990s until signing of the FTA in 2005, it was clearly in favour of Pakistan.

The FTA framework agreement was signed by the two sides in 2002 during the visit of President Pervez Musharraf to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka was the first country with which Pakistan signed an FTA which came into effect in June 2005. During President Chandrika Kumaratunga's visit to Islamabad in February 2005 for signing the FTA, both leaders expressed hope that it would open a new era of trade and economic cooperation. President Musharraf felt, the "FTA will impart a tremendous boost to our economic and commercial ties, we will identify areas for developing greater economic cooperation, this will certainly be beneficial for both."<sup>2</sup> President Kumaratunga viewed the free-trade accord with Pakistan as a major development in relations between the two countries and believed that it would take bilateral trade to a higher level.<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shaukat Aziz, described the signing of the FTA as 'historic' and said it would be a turning point in the economic ties between the two South Asian states.

The two sides agreed to forge multifaceted cooperation and signed four accords and two MoUs, including the FTA. These included an

MoU for technical assistance in the field of gemstones and jewellery; MoU on cooperation in agriculture, close cooperation in education, including contacts between academia; students and teachers exchanges, waiver of student visa fees; MoU between the Sri Lanka-Pakistan Business Council and Pakistan-Sri Lanka Business Forum; promotion of activities for P2P contact; promotion of tourism, promotion of science and technology; collaboration in information technology and telecommunications,<sup>4</sup> exchange of parliamentary delegations. The two countries operationalised the annexures in the bilateral FTA, and inked agreements on a protocol to the FTA covering services and investment sectors, and agreement for the provision of export credit facility of US \$ 10 million to Sri Lanka for the purchase of goods from Pakistan. They also agreed to hold the next meeting of the JEC in Colombo and to explore the possibility of having a single country exhibition in Sri Lanka by the Export Promotion Bureau, Pakistan to coincide with the JEC. Further, the joint communique said both would work together to further enhance cooperation in the field of defence, and in particular, cooperation in training of military and police personnel.

### **Major Features of PSFTA**

Article -I of the FTA, clearly defined that the key objectives of the free trade agreement is to expand bilateral trade, offering a comparative advantage over the products originated from other supplying counties as well as to promote through the expansion of trade in goods and services, to provide fair conditions of competition for trade in goods and services activities, to contribute best to remove the barriers to trade in goods and services, to promote harmonious development and to witness expansion of bilateral as well as world trade activities.

Under the FTA agreement, both countries agreed to reduce customs duty to zero percent on over 310 items. FTA favoured Sri Lanka as under the agreement, it had a larger negative list and longest tariff liberalisation periods. Sri Lanka was to eliminate the customs duty on 4527 tariff lines out of total tariff lines of 5224 at six-digit level, covering around 87% of tariff lines in five years. Pakistan, on the other hand, agreed to eliminate the customs tariff on 4680 tariff lines out of a total of 5224 tariff lines at six-digit

level, covering around 90 percent over a period of three years. The elimination of customs duty covered as much as 69% of the actually traded goods between the two countries.<sup>5</sup> Pakistan's no concession list ran to 540 items at the 6-digit level, while Sri Lanka's no concession list ran to 697 items, which were cut down to 607 items in April 2013, but still higher than that of Pakistan.

Under the FTA, Sri Lanka agreed to eliminate tariff on long grain basmati rice and potato under TRQ of 6,000 tons and 1,000 tons per annum, respectively. While Pakistan agreed to eliminate tariff on import of 10,000 tons of tea and reduce tariff on 1,200 tons of betel leaves by 35 percent on the basis of margin preference as well as various clothing items. The negotiations had remained stuck on elimination of tariff of basmati rice and potatoes from the Pakistani side and tea and betel leaves from the Sri Lankan side. Pakistan also granted Sri Lanka TRQs for three million pieces of apparel products, covering 20 categories, where there was market potential without restrictions regarding country of origin of fabrics. In addition, Sri Lankan ceramic tiles and tableware also enjoyed 20 percent of preferential tariff margin.<sup>6</sup> Sri Lanka also granted to Pakistan TRQs for duty-free export of Kino (orange). The terms of the FTA required Pakistan to phase out tariffs on items not on its no-concession list by 2008, while Sri Lanka had till 2010 to do the same. FTA was fully operationalised in 2010. Both sides agreed to eliminate custom tariff on almost 90 percent of products by June 2010.

**Table 1:** Duty Concessions under PSFTA

<b>Duty Concession</b>	<b>Pakistan's Commitments (no of tariff lines)</b>	<b>Sri Lanka's Commitments (no of tariff lines)</b>
Negative list (no concession)	540	697*
Immediate zero duty concession	206	102
<b>Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ)</b>		
Tea: duty free 10,000 MT	4	1
Apparel: 35% MOP 3mm pieces	21	1
Basmati rice: duty free 6,000 MT		
Potatoes: duty free 1,200 MT		
<b>Product entitle for MOP</b>		
Betel: 20 % MOP	1	
Cosmetics: 50 % MOP	11	

<b>Tariff Liberalisation Programme</b>	34%, 67%,100% reduction over 3 years (till 2008)	20 %, 30 %,40 %, 60 %, 80 %, 100 % reduction over 5 years (till 2010)
<b>Rules of Origin</b>	Direct Value Addition (DVA) is 35% of FOB value. If parts of an input originate from a contracting country, minimum aggregate content must be 35% with minimum domestic input content being 25%.	
*In 2013 amended and brought down to 607.		

**Source:** Based on Deshal de Mel, “India-Sri Lanka, Pakistan-Sri Lanka Bilateral Free Trade Agreement”, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS), 2008.

“An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement”, April 2015.

<http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>

Major Pakistani exports that Sri Lanka granted full concession, included cotton, apparel, knitted fabrics and cement. Major Sri Lankan exports granted full concession by Pakistan included rubber, coconut products and vegetable products. With the opening up of the markets, it was expected that private sectors on both sides would take full advantage of the newly opened trade opportunities. After signing of the FTA, it was hoped that both would eventually move towards a CEPA.

New areas of bilateral cooperation identified by the two sides included tourism, banking, telecommunications, IT, textile and garment sector as well as gem and jewellery industry. The strengthening of air links between the two countries were also proposed.

### **FTA and Growth of Bilateral Trade (2005-2015)**

In a decade before the signing of FTA, the volume of trade between the two countries was very low and tilted in favour of Pakistan. In the years 1997-98, the total volume of trade was US \$ 139.453 million with Pakistan’s exports to Sri Lanka constituting US \$ 101.519 million and imports US \$ 37.934 million. During 2003-04, a year before the FTA was signed, the bilateral trade stood at US \$ 146.2 million, with Pakistan exporting US \$ 97.826 million while importing US \$ 48.390 million. This constituted 0.79% of the total exports of Pakistan and 0.310% of its total imports. This showed

that Sri Lanka's share in total exports and imports of Pakistan had gradually declined over the years. In the year 1997-98, Sri Lanka's share in Pakistan's total exports was 1.77% and in imports 0.375%.<sup>7</sup>

The volume of bilateral trade grew after signing the FTA but pace of growth has been much lower than expected. Pakistan's exports to Sri Lanka grew from US \$ 154 million in 2004 to US \$ 316 million in 2013, an increase of 105% in nine years. Pakistan only accounted for 1.7% of total Sri Lankan imports from the world in 2013. On the other hand, Sri Lankan exports to Pakistan grew from US \$ 46 million to US \$ 63 million, an increase of just 37% during the period. Sri Lanka had only 0.14% share in Pakistani imports from around the world in 2013. During 2014-15, total bilateral trade stood at US \$ 724.702 million. Pakistan exported worth US \$ 266.907 million to Sri Lanka against imports of US \$ 57.795 million. So, Pakistan has remained an insignificant export destination for Sri Lankan products during the period the FTA has come into effect. Similarly, the year-on-year growth in the exports of Pakistan to Sri Lanka is very much in line with pre-FTA trend-higher than its imports from Sri Lanka. Thereby, balance of trade continues to be in favour Pakistan.

**Table 2:** Volume of Bilateral Trade 2004 to 2015 (*US \$ in Millions*)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total trade	Balance
2004-05	155.830	44.813	200.643	(+) 111.017
2005-06	159.212	71.288	230.500	(+) 87.924
2006-07	200.605	63.384	263.989	(+) 137.221
2007-08	214.582	61.584	276.17	(+) 153.00
2008-09	189.694	65.156	254.850	(+) 124.538
2009-10	283.142	54.602	337.744	(+) 228.540
2010-11	331.848	57.330	389.178	(+) 274.518
2011-12	305.301	68.764	374.065	(+) 236.537
2012-13	327.141	76.569	403.71	(+) 250.572
2013-14	260.239	61.933	322.172	(+) 198.306
2014-15	266.907	57.795	724.702	(+) 209.112

**Source:** Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Major Pakistani exports to Sri Lanka include cotton products, cement, refined sugar and potatoes. Major Sri Lankan exports to

Pakistan include vegetable products, rubber, fibreboard and coconut products. Sri Lanka is not a major origin of imports for Pakistan, with the exception of vegetable plaiting materials, whose Sri Lankan imports account for 69% of all Pakistani imports of the product.<sup>8</sup> At the 2-digit HS code level 16 of the top 20 Pakistani export items registered net growth over the 2004-2013 period. The major growth items were cotton, which showed an increase of over US \$ 41 million, and HS 25 (salt, sulphur etc.), which showed an increase of over US \$ 45 million, though from a very low initial level of exports. An analysis at the 6-digit HS code level reveals pessimistic trend bilateral trade relations over the past decade.

Out of total 3502 items at full concession for exports from Pakistan, only 308 (8.8%) items showed net growth in the 2004-2013 period. 2952 (84.3%) full concession items exhibited no growth during this period, and the remaining 242 (6.9%) items showed a fall in exports. Further, 3121 (89%) items at full concession showed zero exports in 2013, and 2934 (83.7%) items also showed zero exports in 2004. This suggests that little diversification of exports has been achieved during the FTA period.<sup>9</sup> Out of total 568 items at no concession (including the items granted partial concessions in the form of TRQs), only 53 (9.3%) items showed net growth. 469 (82.3%) items registered no growth, whereas the remaining 46 (8.1%) items fell in exports. 501 (88%) of these items reported no exports in 2013, and 471(83%) items reported zero exports in 2004. Non-concession items accounted for around US \$ 34 million of exports to Sri Lanka in 2004 and around US \$ 70 million in 2013, indicating a growth of 51%.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that both countries are still trading in the same products in which they were dealing prior to the FTA, while most tariff lines continue to show zero trade. Both countries are trying to reach a target of US \$ 1 billion at the earliest. In contrast, Sri Lanka's trade ties with India and China have exhibited a significant and fast-paced growth. Trade between Sri Lanka and India grew from just US \$ 658 million in 2000 to US \$ 3.6 billion in 2013, an increase of 450% in 13 years since the two countries signed the FTA in 2000.<sup>11</sup> Currently, their bilateral trade stands at US \$ 4.7 billion, and discussions are going on a draft Economic and Technical Cooperation

Agreement (ETCA) and a draft Economic and Technical Cooperation Framework Agreement (ETCFA). With China, Sri Lanka's bilateral trade also exceeded US \$ 3 billion in 2013,<sup>12</sup> which has now touched US \$ 4 billion.<sup>13</sup>

### **Impediments in Way of Trade and Economic Partnership**

The FTA between the two countries has not been fully utilised due to a variety of reasons. The Pakistan Business Council in its study of FTA identified at least six reasons for low performance of FTA. These are:<sup>14</sup>

- Sri Lanka is perceived as a small market by businessmen
- Few links between Pakistan-Sri Lanka business communities
- Unilateral changes that oppose the spirit of the FTA
- Insufficient involvement of business community in drafting of the FTA
- Lack of awareness about FTA terms and potential of Sri Lankan Market; and
- Lack of reliable forums for the arbitration of trade disputes

The issues confronted by FTA were highlighted by Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Syed Shakeel Hussain, while speaking at a bilateral trade seminar organised by the National Chamber of Commerce in Colombo in May 2016. He pointed out that there have been a lot of NTB imposed from both sides. Lack of promotion of each country, non-advocacy of initiatives by the private sector of the both sides<sup>15</sup> were in particular obstructing the growth of bilateral trade ties. Some of major obstacles hindering trade and economic partnership follow as:

- **Lack of Interaction between Pakistani and Sri Lankan Business Communities:** With the two countries, having opened up their markets, it was expected that their private sectors would take full benefit of the newly opened trade opportunities, but that has not happened so far in a substantive manner. One of the major reasons for that is lack of interaction between Pakistani and Sri Lankan



exporters. Absence of regular visits of trade delegations and single-country exhibitions has resulted in weak business links between business communities of the two countries.

- **Lack of Awareness about Sri Lankan Markets:** The lack of interaction and links between the Pakistani and Sri Lankan business communities have led to lack of awareness about the Sri Lankan markets. This has hampered the identification of business opportunities in either country as well as prevented existing partnerships being deepened. There is also less awareness about the potential opportunities that FTA offers to traders and businessmen on both sides.
- **Lack of Interest and Misconceptions about Sri Lankan Markets:** There is also a misconception, especially amongst the business communities in both countries about the existing trade potential, because of which neither country views the other as a priority market despite an abundance of opportunities. Certain Pakistani exporters within high potential export sectors do not view Sri Lanka as having significant potential as a prospective trading partner. To them, given Sri Lanka's small size, it is a significantly smaller market for Pakistani goods compared to Malaysia and Indonesia.<sup>16</sup>
- **Issues Related to the Operationalisation of FTA:** The unilateral imposition of para tariff barriers without consulting the other side has adversely affected some of the Pakistani exports from time to time. In 2011, Sri Lanka imposed a special commodity levy on certain fruits and vegetables; such as oranges, onions and potatoes despite the fact that barring potatoes, which were under a TRQ, none of the items were on Sri Lanka's no concession list. This levy replaced a cess that was previously required of Sri Lankan importers led to hike in prices resulting in the cancellation of orders made to Pakistani exporters. Similarly, steel pipes, a significant Pakistani export, 50% of the Sri Lankan galvanised pipe market was supplied by Pakistani producers in 2013, now face a cess, which has pushed prices up by 26.5%. As a result, the Pakistani share of the pre-galvanised tube market has shrunk from 60% in 2011

to 40% in 2013.<sup>17</sup> The FTA clearly states that the Contracting Parties “agree not to make any increase in the existing para tariffs, if any, or introduce new or additional para tariffs, without mutual consent,”<sup>18</sup> which needs to be observed by both sides.

- There are also some hiccups emerging from the non-involvement of the business community as a stake holder in the drafting of the FTA. A businessman pointed out that “concessions granted on key raw materials to a small country like Sri Lanka with relatively low production capacity created a difficult situation for the relevant businesses at home.”<sup>19</sup> The argument is that each sector has its own needs and challenges, which are best known to stakeholders in those sectors and government must involve them in the drafting process of trade agreements.
- The dispute resolution mechanism in the FTA is also found quite weak, which discourages investment by the Pakistani businessmen in Sri Lanka. In this context, most notable case is of Thatta Cement, a Pakistani company that suspended its project in Sri Lanka, because the Sri Lanka Ports Authority did not execute its land lease agreement. Plans to establish Pakistani sugar mills in Sri Lanka also seem to have stalled.

### **Tapping Trade Potential: High Potential Trade Items**

Pakistan Business Council, in its study on Pakistan-Sri Lanka FTA, has identified high potential tradable items from both sides that can expand the volume and value of trade between the two countries. It suggests that a lack of trade potential is not the primary impediment to better Pakistan-Sri Lanka trade relations. The study revealed that Pakistan and Sri Lanka have the potential to increase bilateral trade over six times from the current US \$ 380 million to US \$ 2.7 billion by just effectively utilising their FTA.<sup>20</sup>

The following are selected Pakistani export items with high trade potential and favourable CAGR values. Out of the total trade potential of around US \$ 1.7 billion for the items surveyed at the 6-digit level, US \$ 500 million is concentrated in items with favourable CAGR values.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 3:** Pakistani Products that have high trade potential and encouraging CAGR values

HS Code	Product Label	Total Trade Potential in High CAGR Items (US \$ M)	Number of high potential/ CAGR items at 6-digit HS code
73	Articles of iron or steel	53	3
39	Plastics and articles thereof.	34	11
85	Electrical, electronic equipment	29	6
62	Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, not knitted or crocheted	16	3

**Source:** “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,”  
The Pakistan Business Council, April 2015.

The following are selected Sri Lankan export item HS codes with high potential and favourable CAGR values at the 6-digit HS code level. Out of the total trade potential of around US \$ 1 billion for the items surveyed at the 6-digit level, US \$ 880 million is concentrated in items with favourable CAGR values.

**Table 4:** Sri Lankan Products that have high trade potential and encouraging CAGR values

HS Code	Product Label	Total Trade Potential in High CAGR Items (US \$ M)	Number of high potential/ CAGR items at 6-digit HS code
09	Coffee, tea, creamer, spices	316	2
85	Electrical, electronic equipment	75	13
40	Rubber and articles thereof	40	6
21	Miscellaneous edible preparations	31	2

**Source:** “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,”  
The Pakistan Business Council, April 2015.

Another study using gravity model<sup>22</sup> of trade shows that Sri Lanka’s existing trade potential with Pakistan is high. Therefore, Sri Lanka

should explore ways and means to further improve its trade relations with Pakistan and also concentrate more on new products to increase its market share as far as possible. It is pointed out that Sri Lankan entrepreneurs and exporters need to diversify from traditional export markets to industrial markets in Pakistan. The study also highlighted that during post-PSFTA period Sri Lanka's trade dependency ratios have increased compared with pre-PSFTA scenario. This is evidenced from continuously increased post-PSFTA trade deficit. Hence, Sri Lanka should encourage investors from Pakistan to invest in Sri Lanka.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, both studies indicate that there is great potential for expansion of commercial ties between the two countries.

### **Expanding FTA: Reinvigorating Economic Partnership**

Efforts are going on for the last many years to expand existing parameters of trade ties under the FTA. In July 2007, in a meeting between Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri and Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Dr. Palitha T.B. Kohona, both sides agreed to work towards diversifying bilateral cooperation in areas including trade, tourism, education and oil and gas exploration.<sup>24</sup> In 2008, during a meeting between Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama with his Pakistani counterpart Inamul Haq, the progress made under FTA was reviewed and it was stressed on increasing the volume of bilateral trade to US \$ 1 billion by expanding the scope of FTA. Pakistani side stressed the need to expand the scope of the FTA by including trade in services, investment and trade facilitation while Sri Lanka expressed its desire to benefit from the Pakistani expertise in the field of oil exploration. The discussions also covered some specific areas for trade promotion, joint ventures and investments.<sup>25</sup> Although in first three years of the FTA, the bilateral trade had doubled and touched US \$ 400 million, but still it was not very impressive trade volume.

In November 2010, during his visit to Sri Lanka, President Zardari offered closer cooperation in financial and banking sectors including opening a branch of the National Bank of Pakistan in Colombo on a reciprocal basis; establish closer links between the Chambers of Commerce and reactivating of the JEC. The last meeting of JEC was held in 2007. The JEC was tasked to work out modalities for a new and unconventional phase of economic cooperation marked by barter

trade, currency exchange and banking interchanges. The two countries also identified cooperation in cement, sugar, dairy production, chemical plants, textiles, tourism and pharmaceuticals as potential areas of mutually beneficial collaborative projects. Agreements were also signed on waiving visa requirements for officials and diplomats, cooperation in customs-related matters and augmenting cultural exchange and a MoU on cooperation in agriculture.<sup>26</sup> It was also decided to restore the air link for PIA between Karachi and Colombo, which would enhance public and business contacts. Sri Lankan Airways operates three flights a week from Karachi to Colombo. A soft credit line of US \$ 200 million was also extended to Sri Lanka to help exporters.

A meeting of the JEC was held in July 2011, but could not develop consensus on removing the NTB. In February 2012, during President Mahinda Rajapaksa's visit to Pakistan, three MoUs were signed to promote cooperation in the fields of trade, technical education and media. Both sides agreed to increase bilateral trade to US \$ 2 billion by 2015. The Fifth Technical-Level Meeting on FTA, held in April 2013, resolved the no-concession list of Pakistan and constituted new Joint Working Groups (JWGs) in the fields of trade, investment, customs and auto sector. In the first meeting of JWGs that was held in Islamabad in October 2014, both sides agreed to revisit Pakistan-Sri Lanka bilateral treaty signed in 1997 and make necessary amendments in the wake of international and national developments to provide an enabling environment to the investors on both sides.

In 2015, during President Maithripala Sirisena's visit to Pakistan, four MoUs and two agreements were signed to bolster cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, sports, disaster management and shipping. During Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Sri Lanka in January 2016, eight agreements and MoUs were signed that related to defence, security, anti-terrorism, trade and science and technology. These included a MoU between the Financial Intelligence Unit of Sri Lanka and Financial Monitoring Unit of Pakistan Concerning Cooperation in the Exchange of Financial Intelligence Related to Money Laundering the Terrorism Financing, MoU between the Export Development Board (EDB) of Sri Lanka and the TDAP on Trade Cooperation and MoU between the Gem and Jewellery

Research and Training Institute of Sri Lanka and Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design. Sri Lankan businessmen were invited to visit Pakistan and explore opportunities for investment in the country. The economic partnership will be enhanced, if FTA is effectively implemented and its scope is broadened to include trade in services and investment, single country exhibitions are held more frequently and a more effective dispute resolution mechanism is put in place.

- **Expanding Scope of FTA:** There is a need for effective implementation of the existing FTA and broadening its scope. Negotiations have already started to expand the existing FTA to trade in services and investment. Technical-level meetings have detailed out the basic framework for inclusion of new subjects in the FTA such as trade in services; investment and removal of TRQs and margins of preference and evolving custom cooperation. A currency swap agreement is also under consideration. Pakistan has also showed interest in pursuing CEPA, but the Sri Lankan side has showed reluctance to enter into negotiations on CEPA at this stage and is stressing more on effective implementation of the existing FTA.
- **Single Country Exhibition:** The single-country exhibition in each other's countries should be held regularly as it promotes linkages between the business communities of the two countries. Long after signing the FTA, Pakistan's Trade Development Authority organised two Single Country Exhibitions in Colombo in 2016 and 2017 respectively. These exhibitions were facilitated by the Sri Lankan Export Development Board (EDB) and Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. The exhibitions showcased Pakistani brands in engineering, auto parts, agro-food, textile and clothing, designer wear, furniture, leather, handicrafts and traditional textiles, cosmetics and herbal products, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, carpets, marble and technology sectors. These exhibitions provided a great platform to both countries to strengthen their bilateral trade as more than 750 Sri Lankan buyers and importers visited the 125 exhibitors comprising leading Pakistani exporters. Sri Lankan importers showed major interest in the auto, pharmaceuticals, engineering,

fruits and vegetables, garments and textile sectors. Sri Lanka's huge furniture outlets have shown great interest in Pakistani furniture and invited the Furniture Association of Pakistan to visit their offices and to discuss prospects of importing Pakistani Furniture to their country. All Pakistan Furniture Manufacturers Exporters Association (APFEA) was successful in getting export orders worth US \$ 30 million. A joint venture in the auto sector worth at least US \$ 15 million per annum was finalised. Another Pakistani frozen food company received an order of one 40-foot container of their products.<sup>27</sup> In April 2016, the first ever product specific exhibition, TeXpo 2016, was arranged by the TDAP in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce Pakistan at Karachi's Expo Centre. It focused on value-added textile products like high-end garments, hosiery, ready-made garments and knitwear.

- **Expanding Investment Opportunities:** In April 2006, the then President of the FPCCI, Ch Muhammad Saeed said that currently 17 Pakistani companies with Rs. 380 million investments were operating in Sri Lanka, which reflected the aspiration of the private sector of Pakistan to enhance economic cooperation with Sri Lanka. There exists a huge potential in the food sector, corporate farming, telecommunication, IT, software development, tourism, banking, education and health. Both countries, he said, through the establishment of joint ventures in the mutually interested areas could further boost bilateral economic relations. The share business, which had been gaining momentum in Pakistan, could be harnessed for attracting bilateral investment. "We suggest the floating of companies at the Stock Exchange on reciprocal basis," stated, Mr. Saeed.<sup>28</sup> Sri Lankan Minister for Trade, Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Jeyaraj Fernandopulle, in a meeting with FPCCI offered Pakistani businessmen to set up textile industries in Sri Lanka as Pakistan could not qualify for the GSP plus scheme; zero rate of duty to the EU market.<sup>29</sup> The Sri Lankan side also offered to set up a dedicated GSP plus investment zone. The country had offered a credit facility of US \$ 10 million to the Pakistani importers to facilitate

the import of products from Sri Lanka. Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President, Sheikh Muhammad Arshad, observed that Pakistan and Sri Lanka are lucrative investment locations for each other's exporters as on the one hand, Pakistan is a gateway to resource-rich Central Asian states, while on the other, Sri Lanka enjoys easy access to huge European and Indian markets.<sup>30</sup> There are more than 25 Pakistani companies operating in Sri Lanka. Pakistan's steel, sugar and cement sector has shown interest in investing in Sri Lanka. Dispute resolution mechanisms also need to be strengthened.

- In 2012, Rohita Thilakaratne, President Pakistan-Sri Lanka Business Council, said that Sri Lanka was planning to set up an industrial park for the pharmaceutical industry and Pakistani pharma investors should explore possibilities of establishing joint ventures in that facility in Sri Lanka.<sup>31</sup> In 2014, Pakistan set up a handloom textile training project and the 'textile village' at Kottala-Meerigama in Sri Lanka. Pakistan has also launched a housing project for war-affected families in Sri Lanka. It will help 230 homeless families from Puthukkudiyiruppu, Narikaddu and Moddaikadai villages. The cost of houses will be borne by the Government of Pakistan, while roads, electricity and other external facilities will be contributed by the government of Sri Lanka.
- **Promoting Tourism:** At the time of signing of FTA, both sides had emphasised the need for greater collaboration in the tourism sector, which would enhance greater P2P contacts with particular emphasis on religious tourism. In a MoU signed on tourism, the two sides agreed to work towards doubling the tourist traffic between the two countries by the year 2010. Pakistan's rich archaeological heritage offers unparalleled religious tourism to the people of Sri Lanka, and to the people of near and Far East. For that, the two sides should recognise the importance of enhancing the air connectivity between the two countries so as to utilise full benefits under the FTA and the tourist potential. The aviation authorities of the two countries should consider the liberalisation of air services regime.



- **Expanding Shipping Business:** Mutual cooperation in shipping business between PNSC and the CSCL is going to boost their commercial relations. The recommencement of a regular feeder shipping service between Colombo and Karachi would facilitate greater trade between the two countries.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of the performance of FTA shows that the present volume of trade and economic partnership is far below its real potential. There exists huge untapped potential in high potential tradable items that need to be exploited by both sides. This can expand bilateral trade by six times and take it to US \$ 2.7 billion. A major impediment in this regard is lack of awareness about trade and investment opportunities on the part of businessmen on both sides. This is in turn due to lack of interaction and linkages between them. There is a need to organise Single Country Exhibitions in each other's countries on regular basis. Further, the commercial relationship can be expanded by improving air connectivity and shipping service between the two countries. Investment in collaborative projects in Sri Lanka can expand economic opportunities and address the trade imbalance that Sri Lanka suffers vis-a-vis Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan's exports to Sri Lanka have declined to US \$ 266 million in 2014 from US \$ 331 million in 2010 and this trend needs to be reversed. Both sides also need to remove NTB, expand FTA and effectively utilise the opportunities available under FTA.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> The CAGR is the geometric mean of the individual annual growth rates during a period. It gives you the growth rate that would have gotten your initial value to your final value had the value grown smoothly over the relevant period.

<sup>2</sup> “Pakistan, Lanka see boost in trade: Musharraf, Kumaratunga hold talks”, *Dawn*, February 9, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> “Pakistan, Lanka see boost in trade: Musharraf, Kumaratunga hold talks”, *Dawn*, February 9, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Mariana Baabar, “Pakistan, Sri Lanka Sign Free Trade Agreement”, *The News*, February 10, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> “Pakistan, Sri Lanka sign free trade pact”, *Dawn*, February 10, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Alauddin Masood, “Pakistan-Sri Lanka to Boost Trade Relations”, *The News*, September 20, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). Quoted in Shaheen Akhtar, “Pakistan- Sri Lanka Relations: Economic Dimension”, in Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations, (Seminar Proceedings) Institute of Strategic Studies, (ISSI) 23 February 2004.

<sup>8</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Farhan Zaheer, “Free Trade Agreement: Pakistan, Sri Lanka could Enhance Trade to US \$ 2.7 billion,” *The Tribune*, May 20, 2015. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/889029/free-trade-agreement-pakistan-sri-lanka-could-enhance-trade-to-2-7b/>

<sup>12</sup> Farhan Zaheer, “Free Trade Agreement: Pakistan, Sri Lanka could enhance trade to \$2.7b,” *The Tribune*, May 20, 2015. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/889029/free-trade-agreement-pakistan-sri-lanka-could-enhance-trade-to-2-7b/>.

<sup>13</sup> “Sri Lanka-China Bilateral Trade Crosses US \$ 4 billion, FTA to Solidify Growth in Trade,” *Colombo Page*, November 23, 2016. [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16B/Nov23\\_1479884127CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16B/Nov23_1479884127CH.php).

<sup>14</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Indunil Hewage, “Removing Negative Lists can Boost Trade with Pakistan – Envoy,” *Daily News*, Colombo, May 20, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf.

<sup>17</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> “Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” <http://www.ptfp.com.pk/Trade/Content/pakistan-sri-lanka-free-trade-agreement/wsdindex.html>

<sup>19</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> “An Assessment of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement,” April 2015. <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/An-Assessment-of-the-Pakistan-Sri-Lanka-Free-Trade-Agreement.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Gravity Model based on analytical indicators of variables through per capita income, gross domestic product (GDP), trade to GDP ratios or openness intra-trade to GDP ratios and exchange rate for the periods of 1980-2010. See., A.A.M.Nufile, S.Santhirasegaram, S.M.M.Ismail, “Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (PSFTA): A Comparison with SAARC and SAFTA,” *International Journal of Accounting, Business and Management, (IJABM)* Vol. 1. No.1, April 2013. p. 128.

<sup>23</sup> A.A.M.Nufile, S.Santhirasegaram, S.M.M.Ismail, “Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (PSFTA): A Comparison with SAARC and SAFTA,” *International Journal of Accounting, Business and Management, (IJABM)* Vol. 1. No.1, April 2013. p. 128.

<sup>24</sup> “Pakistan, Lanka to diversify cooperation,” *Dawn*, July 19, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Baqir Sajjad Syed, “Pakistan, Sri Lanka to Expand FTA Scope,” *Dawn* February 1, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> “Accords with Lanka on Visa, Customs,” *Dawn*, November 29, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> “Pak, Lankan Businesses Houses Matured Deals Worth US \$ 1.2 Billion: TDAP,” *The Nation*, January 19, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> “Lanka Seeks Investment in Textile Sector,” *Dawn*, April 2, 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> “Sri Lankans for Joint Efforts to Boost Mutual Trade,” *The News*, December 8, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> “Sri Lanka Offers Joint Ventures in Pharma Industry,” *The Nation*, October 11, 2012.



## **Part IV**

### **Socio-Cultural Dimensions (People-to-People Contact)**



## 8 Pakistan-Sri Lanka Socio-Cultural Relations: A Sri Lankan Perspective

*Asantha Senevirathna & Sanath De Silva*

*Pakistan has the warmest goodwill towards Ceylon, and I am sanguine that the good feeling which exists between our two people will be further strengthened as the years roll by and our common interests, and mutual and reciprocal handling of them, will bring us into still closer friendship.*

(Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah)<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The above message conveyed by H. E. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan on the independence of Sri Lanka in 1948, identifies the type of relationship the two former colonies should foster in time to come. Sri Lanka and Pakistan are countries, which received independence from the British colonial rulers during the same era, in 1947 and in 1948 respectively. Since then, both countries have maintained very cordial relations with each other. The relationship in defence cooperation has been exceptionally strong as well as beneficial, as was proven during the recently concluded conflict. When some nations were running with the hare and hunting with the hound, throughout the conflict, Pakistan valiantly dared to offer us much needed succour, for which Sri Lanka is grateful to Pakistan. Due to various similarities, the two countries have also developed a lasting P2P relationship during the post-independence history. Even prior to independence, facts stand out to highlight that the two countries have shared robust socio-cultural relations involving the populace. There is evidence that P2P relationship had existed even two thousand five hundred years ago, during the golden era of the Gandhara civilisation that flourished across present Pakistan. After the colonial rule wound up in both countries, the relations adopted new dimensions linking the masses of both. This chapter examines the socio-cultural bonds among the people at both ends in the spheres of religion, arts and crafts, cinema, sports and education.

## **Pre-Independence Religious-Cultural Relations**

The civilisational links between Pakistan and Sri Lanka date back to the dawn of Buddhism. The archaeological sites in Taxila, adjacent to Pakistan's capital city Islamabad, are a living testimony to this fact. Gandhara was part of the Silk Route and many Buddhist pilgrims from far and wide used to visit these sites along this historical trail. Therefore, it is firmly believed that Sri Lanka had maintained cultural interactions with Gandhara (some parts of Northwest Pakistan at present) based on the Buddhist civilisation. According to ancient history, the Anuradhapura Kingdom thrived in Sri Lanka from the latter part of the third millennium BC. as one of the greatest Buddhist civilisations in the world, when concurrently Taxila in Gandhara – a part of present day Pakistan – was prospering in harmony with the Buddhist way of life.

Gandhara is an insight into the richness of the ancient civilisation that remained at the cradle of culture, the seat of learning and the legacy of the ancient world. Most of ancient India's basic philosophy, science, physics, mathematics, medicine, and grammar originated from this region, where the most acclaimed institution – Taxila University – is located. Named after the city where it situated, this university, the world's oldest seat of higher learning, had been in existence well before the time of the Buddha and even before the Achaemanid rulers, who occupied the Taxila valley in the 6<sup>th</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Taxila (or Takshashila), which was placed under the UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1980, figures prominently in Buddhist literature. The city flourished from the fourth millennium BC to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD.<sup>2</sup> Also, during the period of Emperor Asoka, Taxila had been a pre-eminent centre of Buddhist learning that managed the mission of propagating Buddhism across Asia. The region remained a stronghold of Buddhism from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC to the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AD during the period of Mauryan King Asoka the Great and the eminent Kushan King Kanishka.<sup>3</sup> Taxila is said to be the place, where the entire life story of Gauthama Buddha was translated into some physical form of pictures, carvings, sculptures and images, dawning the era of renowned Gandhara art. The Statue, which we see of the Buddha is said to have been first carved by people of ancient Gandhara that encompassed the places known today as Peshawar and Swat.<sup>4</sup>



There has been plenty of evidence to suppose that there existed P2P interaction between the Anuradhapura and Gandhara kingdoms. One point is the construction of the most celebrated stupa in Sri Lanka, the Maha Saya or the Ruwanwelisaya, which was built by the great King Duttagamini of Sri Lanka. It is also accepted that many Sri Lankan sculptures during the Anuradhapura period may have been influenced by the Gandhara traditions. It is widely believed that the Avukana Buddha Statue displays some influence of the Gandhara School of Art.<sup>5</sup>



Avukana Buddha Statue

**Source:** <https://albinger.me/2016/05/17/the-aukana-buddha-sri-lankas-colossal-standing-rock-statue/>

According to the prominent scholar, Professor A.D.T.E. Perera<sup>6</sup>, there have been visitors from the ancient Gandhara Kingdom to witness the occasion and he further elaborates, this initial interaction may have influenced the blending of the Gandhara School of Art tradition with that of the sculptures of Sri Lanka. This amalgamation particularly had bearing on the sculpting of large statues in Sri Lanka. He relates his views as follows:

*When the Mahasaeya or the great pyramidal stupa at Anuradhapura in ancient Sri Lanka was completed by the monarch Dutthagamini (circa 161-137 BC), it was recorded in the ancient chronicle Mahavamsa that to*

*grace the final crowning of the stupa, dignitaries from the monastic establishment of Gandhara also have arrived. It was religious-cultural links that prevailed between the two regions, namely Sri Lanka and Gandhara, which may have led to the borrowing of the creative ideas pertaining to colossal statues of the Buddha.<sup>7</sup>*

Therefore, it can be safely highlighted that Sri Lanka too had enough bonds with this civilisation of the ancient world known as Gandhara, although in reality Gandhara covers a still more extensive area.<sup>8</sup>

## **Post-Independence Religious-Cultural Relations**

### ***Religion***

After gaining independence in the late 1940s, both countries established diplomatic relations in 1948. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries have consistently maintained cordial and mutually supportive P2P relations. This association based on rich Buddhist heritage, and equally harmonious Islamic tenets had a profound impact on enriching the heart-to-heart bond between the two countries. Despite being a predominantly Islamic State, Pakistan preserves and protects one of the world's supreme Buddhist heritage sites built mainly during the time of Emperor Asoka and holds the custody of Gandhara artefacts, in the country's North-western region. This aspect is highly appreciated by the Sri Lankan Buddhists.

It is believed that, when the two countries gained independence, Pakistan inherited a Buddhist minority (about 319,000 in 1947),<sup>9</sup> most of whom have lived in the Eastern wing of Pakistan (presently Bangladesh). The Buddhists living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts had continued to enjoy their right to practice their religion in a Muslim majority country. The then government of East Pakistan also made available grants to the special Buddhist Educational Fund for distribution among Pali schools and for disbursement of stipends to deserving students in various Buddhist colleges, schools and technical institutions.<sup>10</sup> At present, this peaceful setting seems to have been shattered due to ravaging of Buddhist shrines by Muslim extremists in Bangladesh.

Pakistan was one of the key participants at the World Buddhist Conference held in Colombo in 1950. She was also the first country to commemorate the 2500<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the Buddha in 1956, highlighting her ancient Buddhist heritage. Displaying the steadfast religious-cultural bond between the two countries, the Pakistani government has from time-to-time lent Buddhist relics and antiquities, which have been exhibited in most parts of Sri Lanka. She has also presented some sacred relics of the Buddha to the Government of Sri Lanka, thus, further consolidating the long-standing links.

Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, former President of Pakistan, who visited Sri Lanka as a State Guest in 1964 received a sapling of the sacred Bodhi Tree, which is over 2,500 years old,<sup>11</sup> as a special gift from the late Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The sapling was planted in the garden of the Taxila Museum. The Bodhi tree is a supreme symbol for veneration among the Buddhists around the world and particularly among the Sri Lankans. This singular event from the recent past highlights the significance of the State of Pakistan to Sri Lankans because of its ancient Buddhist heritage. Also in 1974, Mrs. Bandaranaike herself, as the head of state of this country, declared open the Gandhara Buddhist Arts Exhibition in Colombo under the auspices of the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo.

The year 2011 marked a landmark event in Pakistan-Sri Lanka religious-cultural relations. This signalled the 2600<sup>th</sup> Year of Enlightenment of Gauthama Buddha, which was a cardinal event for Buddhists throughout the world. As a token to showcase its friendship towards Sri Lanka, the Government of Pakistan despatched the most historically valued relics of the Buddha to be worshipped by Sri Lankans. These relics, believed to be parts of Gauthama Buddha's collarbone, have been preserved in the Museum in Taxila, since these were recovered in 1914 from a Stupa in the ancient Buddhist learning centre of Dharmarajika. The legend has it that this stupa was built by King Asoka himself to enshrine Relics of the Buddha.<sup>12</sup> The Buddha relics, which were encased in a golden casket, were accompanied by two other venerated artefacts, a stone relic casket and a Kanishka relic casket from the museum of Peshawar.<sup>13</sup> The artefacts, which arrived in the country in early June were received with reverential respect by

the Sri Lankan government representatives and Buddhist dignitaries. During the 17-day exposition of the sacred relics in Sri Lanka, millions of devotees thronged to pay homage. In addition to the millions of devotees, all prominent personalities too followed suit.

In 2016, sacred relics from Taxila arrived in Sri Lanka, where they were exhibited during the Vesak Festival from 21<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> June, across the length and breadth of Sri Lanka. Speaking at the handing over ceremony of the relics from Pakistan, the Advisor to Prime Minister on National History and Literary Heritage, Irfan Siddiqui remarked:

*Today we are here to renew our deep rooted cultural relations by despatching an exhibition of the holy relics of Lord Buddha to Sri Lanka coinciding with the upcoming Vesak festival from 19<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> June at diverse locations in Sri Lanka for the veneration by Buddhist devotees.<sup>14</sup>*

This recent event highlighted the robust and consistent cooperation between the Government of Pakistan and that of Sri Lanka in the field of arts and culture. And gracing the occasion the leader of the Sri Lankan delegation, Minister Gamini Jayawickrama Perera observed that thousands of faithful across Sri Lanka would pay homage to the relics during the religious rituals of the Vesak Festival. He said, Sri Lanka attaches high importance to its relationship with Pakistan and both countries are enjoying friendly and cordial relations.<sup>15</sup> This exhibition further fortified the existing deep rooted religio-cultural relations between the two friendly South Asian nations.

### ***Official Cultural Interactions***

There exist several cultural agreements between the two countries, to improve cultural exchanges, ranging from scout training and exchange of sports teams to joint ventures in film-making. To institutionalise cultural cooperation, Pakistan-Ceylon Cultural Society was formed in March 1954 with the Sri Lanka's Minister of Finance Sir Oliver Goonetilleke being appointed as its first president.<sup>16</sup> The society strove for the advancement of social and cultural relations between the two countries. The South Asian Travel Commission was set up in 1956 with Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India as its founder members to promote tourism in this region.<sup>17</sup>

In December 1973, Sri Lanka and Pakistan signed a bilateral cultural agreement, which emphasised, among other things, the promotion of tourism between the two countries. This cultural agreement provides the basis for meaningful cooperation in the fields of folklore, music, dance, painting, exhibitions, calligraphy, etc. In May 1976, after talks in Islamabad, the two countries also agreed to organise and launch a joint publicity campaign in order to promote tourism and to jointly participate in international tourism and travel trade conventions and conferences. Cooperation in the field of information was also discussed during the visit of Pakistan's Minister for Information and Broadcasting to Sri Lanka in November 1980.<sup>18</sup>

Sri Lanka has also shown warm and friendly gestures towards Pakistan, such as by appointing a high-powered national committee to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In December 1976, the Colombo Municipal Council named a public ground in Colombo as "Jinnah Maidan." Since then, there have been several agreements with the most recent being the agreement signed during the visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in January 2016 to promote cultural cooperation. There, an MoU between the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Wayamba Development and Cultural Affairs of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage of Pakistan was signed to forge the cultural interactions between the two countries.

Presents exchanged between the two countries include books and indigenous animals. However, the most precious gift Pakistan has been receiving from Sri Lanka, is that of human eyes for corneal grafting.

### ***From Loralai to Radio Ceylon***

June 2014 marked a rare occurrence highlighting the unshakeable heart-to-heart bonds between the two countries. A Pakistani fan of Radio Ceylon visited Sri Lanka to pay tribute to the staff of SLBC. This enthusiast, named Naik Muhammad Kakar, along with his daughter Ms Rozina made it all the way from a remote village called Loralai in Balochistan, Northwest Pakistan, solely for the purpose of paying high tribute to the SLBC (then Radio Ceylon) for keeping alive perennial favourites from the Indian silver screen. Mr. Kakar was in

his late 50s and his daughter, Ms. Rozina, who was a school girl. They arrived with loads of gifts and lots of love for the announcers and producers of SLBC's Hindi Service, which has, during the past half century, been catering to discerning film music lovers in both Pakistan and India, despite crippling financial constraints.



Naik Muhammad Kakar and his daughter Rozina with SLBC officials and employees

Source: [www.dawn.com/news/1111698](http://www.dawn.com/news/1111698)

According to Mr. Kakar, there seem to be over 3,000 eager listeners of the SLBC's Hindi Service in Pakistan, with Karachi itself topping the list with over 1000 aficionados.<sup>19</sup> Mr. Kakar has emerged as the *primus inter pares* of SLBC listeners in Pakistan, having formed a network of listeners.

Concluding this fascinating gesture, Mr. Kakar awarded medals and certificates of excellence to each of the ten announcers at SLBC, with the following citation, "Thanks for the continued commitment required for Hindi section of Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. You made the difference."<sup>20</sup> Mr. Kakar had crossed a few borders, exclusively to visit SLBC and to talk at first hand to the staff, most of whom he had admired on air over a period of three decades.

The SLBC is perhaps the only radio station in the world, which broadcasts the unforgettable melodies from Hindi classics of the 1930s, 40s, 50s, and 60s. It all began in the 1950s, when All India Radio banned film music for being "trashy" and Radio Pakistan stopped it after the 1965 war with India. Radio Goa was compelled to shut

down after India seized the territory from the Portuguese in 1961.<sup>21</sup> Radio Ceylon was fortunate to have recruited many competent Hindi announcers from India, among those were Gopal Sharma, Manohar Mahajan and Dalvir Singh Parmar.<sup>22</sup> This unique incident shows that the Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon (SLBC) has been immensely popular in the subcontinent and particularly among the Pakistanis.

According to the producer of the Hindi service of SLBC, Jyoti Parmar, “SLBC is the only station, which plays a K.L. Saigal songs [sic] every day, and it offers special programmes on the birth or death anniversaries of departed artistes to perpetuate their memories.”<sup>23</sup> The SLBC is the solitary sentinel to air special programmes to immortalise greats like G.M. Durrani, Zohrabai Ambalewali, Sitara Kanpuri, Raj Kumari Dubey, and Noorjahan.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Naik Muhammad Kakar’s extraordinary gesture of coming all the way from a distant land to SLBC in Colombo, marked a wonderful juncture in P2P contact among Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This amazing visit not only encouraged staff of SLBC, but the crux of the matter is the unshakeable bond that people of Pakistan maintain with Sri Lankans.

### ***Cinema***

We are pleased to note the desired degree of cooperation in the field of cinema that has existed at both ends. In the 1980s, both Pakistan and Sri Lanka had cooperated in the production of films along with other South Asian neighbours. Pakistan-Nepal-Bangladesh-Sri Lanka united to launch many co-productions. There arose a dire need for cooperation and improvement of the ailing film industries of these countries. India has developed into a second Hollywood and she does not even have a regional rival. It is no gainsaying that most Indian films run into packed houses and their DVDs do not gather dust on shelves in all five continents.

Against this scenario, several Urdu-Bengali, Urdu-Nepali and Urdu-Sinhalese, double version films, were released during this period and Sabeetha Perera from Sri Lanka, Babita, Rozina, Nutun, Sunetra and Mustafa from Bangladesh, Shushma Shahi, Minakishi and Shiva Shrestha from Nepal starred in a majority of these co-productions.<sup>25</sup> Out of the galaxy of Bangladeshi-Sri Lankan-Nepalese artistes,

Sri Lankan star Sabeetha became highly popular in Pakistan and enacted her roles to perfection in several box office hits including Miss Colombo, Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna, Bobby, Lady Smuggler, Ruby etc.<sup>26</sup> Here, Naheed Akhtar was vocalising for Nepalese actress Sushma Shahi with Sri Lankan actress Sabeetha (who played the lead in this film) in a scene in Nepal-Sri Lanka-Bangladesh-Pakistan co-production Zameen Aasmaan (1985).<sup>27</sup>

Sabeetha Perera reached stardom among Pakistani fans and she has been highly recognised within the Pakistani motion picture field. In 2008, the Government of Pakistan honoured her with an award, duly recognising her contribution towards the Pakistani cinema. The following is a news report that includes what she has mentioned in an interview back in Sri Lanka,

*Hoop Soorath Aakain Vali Sabeetha - Sabeetha, the young woman with most beautiful eyes...; when announced in Urdu, Sabeetha got on to the stage amidst a thundering applause to receive the Special Award presented to her for the yeoman service she rendered to the Pakistan film industry by starring in 17 Urdu films. "At that function, my only local companion was my beloved mother. I wished if my Sri Lankan fans could also see it, how fortuitous I would have been," remarked Sabeetha reminiscing on one of the red-letter days in her life.*<sup>28</sup>

## **Cricket**

Cricket is the most passionate sport in Sri Lanka. In 1996, Sri Lanka won the Wills One Day World Cup final, playing against Australia at Lahore. However, at the initial stages, it was an uphill task for Sri Lanka to get recognition at the ICC. There was a great distinguished gentleman, who made representations to the ICC on Sri Lanka's interest. He was extremely supportive of obtaining the Test status for Sri Lanka. Abdul Hafeez Kardar was one of the ablest diplomats that Pakistan has ever produced, who steered the Pakistani Cricket Board (PCB). Mr. Kardar is respected as the father figure of Pakistan cricket. Before partition, he played for India, but later – in 1952 – he was appointed the first Test Captain of Pakistan. After hanging up his boots from active playing, he was made the Chairman of Selectors and later became the President of the PCB.



As the President of PCB, Mr. Kardar vigorously pushed Sri Lanka's case for full membership of ICC. Veteran Sri Lankan cricketers like Sidath Wettamuny are of the view that if not for Mr. Kardar, the ICC would have barred Sri Lanka from getting the Test status. Neil Perera – who also served in the Sri Lankan Board of Control for Cricket for nearly two decades in various capacities, including the Secretary – has always commended Mr. Kardar's support to Sri Lankan Cricket. He stressed, Mr. Kardar placed the Sri Lankan case at the ICC, but Australia or England vetoed our chances at every attempt. On such occasions, Mr. Kardar stressed that if the ICC does not grant Sri Lanka the Test status, it is nothing other than plain racial discrimination. However, Mr. Kardar did not give up his fight for Sri Lanka and went ahead to initiate Ali Bhutto Trophy between Under-19 sides of Sri Lanka and Pakistan.<sup>29</sup> In one instance, he went out of the way to arrange Air Force planes to bring the Sri Lankan Under-19 cricketers from Lahore to the ground to play the Ali Bhutto Trophy, in order to make them more comfortable.<sup>30</sup> This great gentleman passed away one month after Sri Lanka won the Wills World Cup. It was not only an irreparable loss to Pakistani cricket, but also the departing of a faithful friend of Sri Lanka.

### ***Winning the World Cup***

When the 1996 ICC World Cup final match was planned to be played in Lahore, Sri Lankans foresaw that their opponents, Australians, were not favourites among Pakistani fans. However, our players did not expect the entire Pakistani nation to cheer whole-heartedly for the Sri Lankan cricketers.<sup>31</sup> When Sri Lanka won the Cricket World Cup, the victorious captain, Arjuna Ranatunga, paid tribute to the captains of the Pakistani and Indian cricket teams. The reason was that they came forward to help Sri Lanka, when West Indies and Australia withdrew their teams from playing on Sri Lankan soil due to their own security assessments. Heart-to-heart affection was felt, when Pakistan and India sent a combined team to play an exhibition match in lieu of those teams. "We welcome the golden sons of India and Pakistan," was boldly displayed on a banner that fluttered at the Colombo Airport to welcome these cricketers. During this tour, the great Sachin Tendulkar and Wasim Akram played together on the same side.<sup>32</sup>



Sri Lanka Captain Ranatunga was presented the World Cup by Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto

**Source:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport3/cwc2003/hi/newsid\\_2630000/newsid\\_2634900/2634933.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport3/cwc2003/hi/newsid_2630000/newsid_2634900/2634933.stm)

The following narrative by Ravindra Pushpakumara, the former opening bowler, on his shopping experience in Pakistan just prior to the finals in Lahore, reveals the level of affection between the people of the two countries:

*As I walked into this carpet shop I saw this beautiful carpet which I really wanted for my parents' place. Problem was that I did not have enough money. The shop owner saw me looking and came to ask me whether I am from the Sri Lanka team...He said... then today money is not a matter. You play cricket and we love the way Jayasuriya and Kalu play. Because of the enjoyment your team has given us, you may take this free.<sup>33</sup>*

Pakistan's cricketers, past and present, were no different from their public. They have unconditionally favoured Sri Lanka. Imran Khan and Rameez Raja are two, who took the trouble to visit the Sri Lankan team and offer expert advice prior to the finals. The great Imran Khan even attended a net practice session with the Sri Lankans.

Sunil Wettimuny, the eldest of the three Wettimuny brothers, who played for Sri Lanka, enjoyed the privilege of flying the Sri Lankans

back home after winning the World Cup. He was a pilot with Air Lanka and witnessed the unprecedented Pakistani hospitality during the match. He vouched that he had never seen a nation supporting another nation in the way that Pakistanis supported Sri Lankans. Further stressing, he stated, “Sri Lankans would not have expected that level of treatment from Pakistan, but Pakistanis showered it upon us.”<sup>34</sup>

There are many other delightful memories related to Sri Lanka’s winning of the World Cup. Promodya Wickramasinghe, then opening bowler, recalls Aravinda de Silva during the world cup, shadow-batting in hotel rooms for hours prior to the match. De Silva was simply visualising bowlers he would be facing and practicing the shots he would play against them. Sometimes, someone would ask him, “Ara (that is his nickname), who are you facing now?” and he would shout back, “Wasim.” “What is he bowling, Ara?” and he replied, “Bouncers.” However, Aravinda’s imagination of facing this great fast bowler would have turned into a nightmare for the Sri Lankan tail-enders, if they had to face Wasim’s formidable bouncers in reality. Sajeewa de Silva,<sup>35</sup> who batted as a tail-ender in many games against Pakistan, said that Wasim or Waqar never bowled bouncers or any formidable deliveries at Sri Lankan tail-enders. That was the kind of respect and love shown towards each other in the field.

### ***Lahore Attack***

The Indian tour of Pakistan in 2004 was reported by the media as Sourav Ganguly and Inzamam-ul-Haq coming to Lahore with their teams to begin what turned out to be one of the greatest series of all-time.<sup>36</sup> The reporting was more like reporting a war between two nations rather than a sport. Following that Indian cricket tour, the Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group issued what amounted to a fatwa against cricket.

In 2009, the Sri Lankan cricket team arrived in Pakistan as a replacement for the Indian team, since Indians cancelled their Pakistani tour after the Mumbai terrorist attacks. Pakistan’s Cricket Board firmly believed that Sri Lanka’s tour would help to recover the loss to cricket in Pakistan. Hence, the Sri Lankan team was offered a presidential style security cordon from the Government of Pakistan. Proving that the

unexpected can happen and often does, the unpredictable terrorists launched an attack targeting the Sri Lankan cricket team, which was en route amidst the heavy morning traffic to Gaddafi Stadium in the heart of Lahore on 4 March 2009.<sup>37</sup>

Twelve highly trained terrorists sprang a commando type ambush targeting the bus that was conveying the Sri Lankan cricketers to the stadium. Fortunately for the Sri Lankans, there happened to be an ordinary but intelligent and bold Pakistani behind the wheel of that bus, who loved our cricketers very much. The driver of the bus, Mehar Mohammad Khalil, had the presence of mind to speed the bus through the hail of fire along a distance of about 500 meters until they reached the safety of the stadium. He expresses the experience as follows,

*My only thought at that time was that the Sri Lankans were guests of my country and its image would be ruined if any of the players got seriously injured. This gave me the courage to drive into the stadium.*<sup>38</sup>



Meher Khalil – the hero who rescued the Sri Lankan players

**Source:** <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/150522/sports-cricket/article/%E2%80%98even-mention-liberty-chowk-raises-my-hair%E2%80%99>

The culprits had also thrown a grenade at the bust, which went underneath and exploded just after the bus had passed over it. If not for his courage under fire, the Sri Lankan cricketers would not have

escaped at the death's door. After a few months, this heroic bus driver visited Sri Lanka and later he expressed,

*The Sri Lankan team wanted me to come with them to Colombo. But I told them that I am a family man and excused myself at that time. Then a month later their president invited me and I went there, when I reached the airport I realised that I am not the driver Meher Khalil who has come here but I am a VVIP. When I used to go out to the market for shopping, people would call me 'hero'.<sup>39</sup>*

Other than the VVIP holidays, the Sri Lankan government rewarded him with a cash prize of US \$ 21,000. Khalil cheated death by his valiant service to his nation and this was highlighted as a classic example of P2P affection of two the countries. The Sri Lankan cricket legend Kumar Sangakkara told Australia's ABC radio that he and his team mates owed their lives to this gentleman.

While people of the two nations were sharing and caring about each other, politicians sent a clear message to the rest of the world about the friendship of two Indian Ocean states. When the attack was taking place, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister was on a visit to Kathmandu and he rushed to Pakistan immediately. He issued a statement affirming that the "Sri Lankan cricket team will give highest consideration to the invitation extended to make a repeat tour. Sri Lanka would not condone Pakistan's isolation in cricket."<sup>40</sup> This is not only the attitude that Sri Lanka maintains in sports, but also in all other spheres of cooperation with Pakistan.

### ***Education***

In March 2008, just prior to the SAARC Summit held in Colombo, the Pakistani High Commission in Sri Lanka received a letter from a La-Sallian Brother Bro. Emmanuel Nicholas, a Sri Lankan Tamil, who belonged to the teaching order of De La Salle Christian Brothers, seeking permission to meet the Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani. To the Brother's surprise, he received a call from Prime Minister Gilani himself and asked him to meet him at Colombo Hilton. A car was despatched to pick him up and after passing a heavy security contingent, the teacher was overjoyed to be reunited with his grade

nine Mathematics student, who had become the Prime Minister of Pakistan.



Bro. Emmanuel Nicholas with Prime Minister Gilani  
**Source:** <http://transcurrents.com/news-views/archives/11075>

Nelson Mandela has observed that education is the most powerful potency with which you may change the world. Bro. Emmanuel Nicholas went to Pakistan, when he was 27 years old. La Salle, Multan, the school where he taught, had been founded by Brothers from Sri Lanka and its principal at that time was Bro. Oliver Gladstone, another Sri Lankan veteran. Even though, Bro. Emmanuel had lost touch with the student after 1968; the grateful student, who now steers Pakistan through turbulent waters, was endowed with a deep sense of gratitude. Prime Minister Gilani affectionately welcomed and introduced him to the officials in his entourage as the strictest teacher.

A Sri Lankan, who belonged to the world renowned De La Salle teaching tradition, had contributed his might making a great leader for Pakistan. Prime Minister Gilani in 2011 recommended Bro. Emmanuel to be given the Tamgha-i-Pakistan (Medal of Pakistan) for the yeoman services, he had rendered to raise the standards of the poor learning communities in Pakistan. This rare honour was accorded on him in March 2012, at the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo.

La Salle school, Multan enjoyed the privilege of having former President Zia-ul-Haq as a Colonel in the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment

stationed there in the mid-sixties. Bro. Emanuel was also a close friend of General Zia and he taught Mathematics to former President's son too. President Zia helped the school to continue with Physical Training classes by providing his Drill Instructors free of charge.<sup>41</sup>

A veteran Sri Lankan broadcaster and media consultant Mohamed Jamaludeen was another fortunate Sri Lankan to receive Pakistan's third highest honour and civilian award, the Sitara-i-Imtiaz, for his services to Pakistan in March 2016. He was the only Sri Lankan to have achieved this distinction, which is rarely accorded to foreigners. He was awarded this award for the services rendered to the Pakistani nation by establishing the Kashmir Study Forum in the early 1990s in order to spread more awareness about Kashmir among Sri Lankans.<sup>42</sup>

### ***State-Level Cooperation in Education***

Educational cooperation has the potential to boost innovation and job creation through mobility and offers opportunities for staff and students to broaden their horizons. Pakistan has always been an inspiration to Sri Lanka's military as well as to the civilian education. When the first ever Urdu Language Training Centre in Sri Lanka was inaugurated in Colombo in 2015, the High Commissioner of Pakistan in Sri Lanka, Major General (Retd.) Syed Shakeel Hussain emphasised that linguistic training would promote mutual understanding of Pakistani culture among Sri Lankans. He further highlighted that learning Urdu language will not only cater to the needs of the Sri Lankan students, who go to Pakistan for educational scholarships, but also to be a utilitarian skill for the business community of both countries.<sup>43</sup>

In April 2016, Sri Lanka and Pakistan signed six agreements, including one on the peaceful use of atomic energy. It provides room for academic cooperation and collaboration between NDU, Pakistan and Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies of Sri Lanka. Promotion of sport is another key feature taken up in the agreements that were signed.<sup>44</sup> This agreement, further promotes cooperation between the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission and the Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka.

On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010, then Sri Lanka's Minister of Power and Energy, addressing the 54<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which was held in Vienna, mentioned, “Sri Lanka has moved towards incorporating nuclear power to country’s energy mix and the Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka has moved to enhance human resource development in the field of nuclear energy.”<sup>45</sup> In such a context, as it was clearly mentioned in the minister’s statement, education and research on nuclear related issues are critical for Sri Lanka. On the other hand, it is always advantageous to be forewarned of the problem of nuclear proliferation in order to curb it. South Asia is also embroiled with serious issues of nuclear material management. It is only with a thorough grounding on the subject matter and genuine cooperation with friendly countries, could Sri Lanka act as a reliable security provider for the region.

The Pakistan High Commission in Sri Lanka awards ‘Jinnah Scholarships’ for deserving Sri Lankan students pursuing their studies at Ordinary Levels and Advanced Levels. The Government of Pakistan has been continuing with the Jinnah Educational Scholarships for the past 11 years, which cost them over Rs. 43 million and so far over 1500 Sri Lankan students have been beneficiaries. From time to time, Pakistani education fairs have also been organised to showcase the progress. The Pakistan High Commission in Sri Lanka notes that a deep rooted and time tested relationship between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, having depth, breadth and diversity, serves as a beacon for other countries of South Asia.<sup>46</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The civilisational links between Pakistan and Sri Lanka date back to the dawn of Buddhism. The archaeological sites in Taxila are a living testimony to this fact. There are similarities in many Gandhara sculptures and that of Sri Lanka, which showcase the connection between the people of the two countries from ancient times. After achieving independence from the colonial rulers in the latter half of the 1940s, both countries have continued to build their goodwill based on mutual values. The relations based on rich Buddhist heritage were to have a profound impact on enriching the P2P relationship among the two countries. Pakistan, predominantly an Islamic state, preserves and safeguards one of the world’s richest Buddhist heritages, built mainly during the time of Emperor Asoka and also Gandhara artefacts, in the



country's North-western region. This attitude is highly appreciated by the Sri Lankan Buddhists. The invaluable Buddha relics from Taxila that were brought to Sri Lanka had been venerated by millions of Sri Lankan devotees. The cultural diplomacy based on the Buddhist heritage has fostered the P2P connections among the two countries.

Since the forming of Pakistan Ceylon Cultural Society in 1954, there have been many official cultural interactions between the two nations. Apart from official cultural interactions the ordinary people's love towards one another is highlighted in the presence of decade's long fans for programmes at Radio Ceylon that are still enjoyed by some Pakistanis. The recognition and popularity of the Sri Lankan actress Sabeetha Perera is ample testimony to the strong links that existed among the cinematic fraternity. Among all the interactions, perhaps, cricket is the most prominent. There are numerous occasions that fans of both countries had cooperated to improve cricket in turbulent times, even under the threat of terrorism at both ends. Sri Lanka's greatest sports triumph, i.e., winning of the 1996 World Cup took place on Pakistan soil with the support of millions of Pakistanis, is indelibly written in the hearts and minds of all cricket lovers in this country.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup>Sabiha Hasan. "Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations," *Pakistan Horizon*, 38 (1985): 104, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41393731>.

<sup>2</sup>"Pakistan's Buddhist Gandhara Heritage," *Asia Tribune*, April 28, 2016, <http://www.asiantribune.com/?q=node/11832>.

<sup>3</sup>Manjula Fernando, "A landmark in breathing new life to spiritual ties: Buddha's sacred relics for exposition from Pakistan," *Sunday Observer*, April 28, 2016, <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2011/06/19/fea15.asp>.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Aukana Buddha Statue: Sri Lanka," <http://www.giganticstatues.com/aukana-buddha-statue/>.

<sup>6</sup>Professor A.D.T.E. Perera of the Department of Philosophy, University of Mexico and former Editor of the Buddhist Encyclopaedia.

<sup>7</sup>Infolanka. A.D.T.E. Perera, Colossal Buddha images of ancient Sri Lanka, <http://www.infolanka.com/org/srilanka/hist/13.htm>.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>*Pakistan News Digest*, 15 July 1954.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Pakistan Sri Lanka Friendship Magazine, *Page from History*, The High Commission of Sri Lanka in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, July 2009, <http://www.slhcpakistan.org/newletter/PDFOnline6-july2009.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup>Manjula Fernando, "A landmark in breathing new life to spiritual ties: Buddha's sacred relics for exposition from Pakistan", *Sunday Observer*, <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2011/06/19/fea15.asp>.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>*Pakistan Today*. "Pakistan hands over Lord Buddha Relics to Sri Lanka." <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/05/19/foreign/pakistan-hands-over-lord-buddha-relics-to-sri-lanka/>.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Sabiha Hasan, "Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Second Quarter 1985), p. 127.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Frances Bulathsinghala. "From Loralai to Colombo with love for old melodies," *Dawn*, April 22, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1111698>.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>"Sabitha Perera," last modified April 25, 2016, <http://cineplot.com/bangladesh-sri-lanka-nepal-pakistan-co-production-zameen-aasmaan-198>.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Lakmal Welabada, “Blend of Love, Stardom and Business,” *Sunday Observer*, 27 April, 2016, <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2008/10/19/spe07.asp>.

<sup>29</sup> “Pakistan Solid Support for Sri Lanka”, *Pakistan Passion*, Last modified on 27 April 2016, [www.pakpassion.net/ppforum.html](http://www.pakpassion.net/ppforum.html).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Fidel Fernando, *Lions Fairy Tale*, Crick Info, Accessed on 27 April 2016, <http://www.thecricketmonthly.com/story/834255>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Informal interview with Sajeewa de Silva conducted by the author on 16 May 2005

<sup>36</sup> Saugat Chakrawarti, *India’s Tour of Pakistan* 30 May 2016, <http://www.sportskeeda.comt-indias-tour-of-pakistan>.

<sup>37</sup> CNN, “Pakistan Sri Lanka Attack” last modified on 5 May 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/03/02/pakistan.srilanka.attack>.

<sup>38</sup> Aamna Mahboob; Mehar Mohammad Khalil: A Hero across Borders, 28 April 2016 - *Sunday Times*, [http://www.sundaytimes.lk/090308/News/sundaytimesnews\\_13.html](http://www.sundaytimes.lk/090308/News/sundaytimesnews_13.html).

<sup>39</sup> *Cricket Next*, “Man who saved Sri Lankan team in 2009 Lahore attack still traumatised,” Accessed on 5 May 2016. <http://www.news18.com/cricketnext/news>.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Frances Bulathsinghala, “The Sri Lankan who taught Gilani and worked for the poor,” 27 April 2016. [www.nytimes.com/2009/03/04/world/asia/04pstan.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/04/world/asia/04pstan.html)

<sup>42</sup> *Sunday Times*, “Veteran Sri Lankan broadcaster awarded Pakistan’s third highest civilian award” <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/160410/sunday-times-2/award-189419.html>.

<sup>43</sup> *Pakistan High Commission in Colombo*. “First-ever-urdu-language-center-in-sri-lanka-inaugurated”, last modified 25th March 2016 [pakistanhc.lk](http://pakistanhc.lk).

<sup>44</sup> *Express Tribune*. “Abdul Manan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka sign nuclear agreement By Web Desk / AFP April 6, 2015 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/865288/nawaz->

<sup>45</sup> Posted by Admin, Ministry of power and Energy, Nuclear Energy for Sri Lanka, 27 2016 <http://powermin.gov.lk/english/>.

<sup>46</sup> “Pak-Lanka relationship serves as a beacon for other countries of South Asia: Pak Envoy” 26 March 2016 <http://www.pakistanhc.lk>.



## 9 Socio-Cultural Perspective of Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations (People-to-People Contact)

*Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Basit*

### Introduction

Socio-cultural cooperation is an important way of understanding and promoting friendship, goodwill and long-term cordial relations between two countries. Socio-cultural or P2P contacts involve interaction of common citizens of the two countries at personal-level without much involvement of the officials. These contacts may include coordination in professional organisations such as Bar Councils, Industrialist Groups, Chambers of Commerce and Industries and Trade Associations. Exchange of skills in the field of education and cultural harmonisation can be materialised through frequently arranged visits of academicians, scholars, artists, musicians, singers, film persona and sportsmen etc.

The unconventional exchange of books, joint publications and austere access to the newspapers and television programmes also encompass the ambit of P2P contacts for the reason of their impact on opinion-making and improving relations. It also occupies a relatively significant place in regional cooperation, even though such activity is considered complementary to the main spheres of action. In fact, it is a significant approach of assuring deep rooted, long-term and sustainable relations, with the free promotion of culture of mutual understanding, acceptability and coexistence between the nations. The relation that blossoms as a result of P2P contact stand higher than mere political claims and declaration as relationships, emotions of the public are involved deep into socio-cultural realm.

As the world has matured into the Global Village, interdependence among countries is essentially increasing in the contemporary scenario. It has turned out to be exceedingly vital to develop individual

contacts among countries through social trades, shared understanding of the social fibre, language, traditions, values, cultural and societal conventions. Developed nations of the world are cognizant of the significance of bilateral trades and have accepted the fact that modern world is the world of connectivity and interaction. There is a need to build public opinion in favour of the policies through free interactions to extend outreach and maximised output of the relationships through efficacious implementation of policies.<sup>1</sup>

### **Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations and P2P Contacts**

Non-governmental interaction is an integral part of international relations as it, on one hand, helps to implement decisions that are accrued from mutual interest leading to create the environment of cooperation, and paving a way for collaboration in unexplored areas of common interest, on the other. This interaction is much needed in case of Pakistan and Sri Lanka as both countries are enjoying profound and affable relationship; nevertheless, they lack informal P2P relations with one another.<sup>2</sup>

In recognition to the crucial role of P2P contact through friendly exchanges and collaboration of culture, various sociological terms are used to denote the common practices of every society for the promotion of cordial bilateral relations. Pakistan and Sri Lanka signed several MoUs to promote cooperation in various fields of common interest, but these MoUs are still awaiting to get implemented, because of reduced and inadequate P2P interaction. Therefore, the need of the hour in the contemporary world is to strengthen their bilateral relations through non-official interaction, even to conduct official businesses.<sup>3</sup>

This socio-cultural cooperation can be strengthened through partnership in various sectors in which both countries have the potential to come closer by involving common man. The important areas that need to focus in the promotion of P2P interaction are industrialist groups, trade and business, exchange of skills in the field of formal and informal educational cultural harmonisation through recurrent visits of artists, musicians, singers, film persona, sportsmen, tourists, visits to religious places, exchange of books and literature, joint publications, easy access to newspapers and television programmes and regular organisation of joint sports events.

Though quite a considerable work has been done in the abovementioned fields, but capacity to explore further avenues in these areas is still desired. What all needed is to infuse consistent and sturdy efforts. Although, many MoUs have already been signed between both governments; for instance, FTA (2010), in which both sides agreed to double the tourist traffic and increase in the number of students and scholars. but still there are opportunities to further enhance the cooperation.

## **Fundamentals of P2P Contacts**

### ***Education***

Since 1948, both countries have been enjoying deeply embedded and warm historic, political and diplomatic relations. Their relationship is illustrated by the vision and recognition by both sides that their social legacy has been entrusted with to move on. Therefore, education sector offers a sound foundation to build a sustainable and versatile partnership to reinforce excellent relations by expanding and strengthening institutional systems for collaboration.<sup>4</sup> Keeping the importance of educational cooperation between the two countries, it can be classified into three aspects, i.e., formal, informal and military education.

In the field of formal education, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have signed various agreements of collaboration; one of such agreements was signed in 2010, between the National College of Arts Pakistan and the University of Visual and Performing Arts of Sri Lanka. In 2012, Pakistan offered support to Sri Lanka in its banking, IT, Engineering and Medical Sciences. Further, both countries are mutually engaged in offering scholarships to high scoring students. Pakistan is also training Sri Lankan diplomats in the Foreign Services Institute of Pakistan.

During all these years of collaborative efforts, the dominant factor that clouded the mutual relationship, is the cooperation in military education and training. It is perhaps, not an exaggeration to claim that Pakistan helped Sri Lanka in tangible terms to end the 30-year long militancy by providing requisite training and warfare skills. However, the strength of the relationship can be achieved through educational exchange programmes between the two states as it would spawn experts in various fields; consequently, paving way for

a knowledge corridor in the near future. Although, several MoUs have been signed between the two countries, but this cooperation needs to be translated into practical form. The Pakistani government needs to expand its cooperation with Sri Lanka in the field of education with the hope that collaboration with Sri Lankans in education would not only help to improve standards of educational institutions, but also the curriculum of Pakistan's education sector.

Despite an ideal literacy rate of 92% in Sri Lanka, still Pakistan can offer wide range of expertise in diverse fields of education. In this regard, Pakistan's extensive support to Sri Lanka during the crucial period of insurgency needs to be translated into essential terms to be included in the syllabi of the Sri Lankan curricula to serve as guideline for the younger generation to build their future national narrative. Pakistan has offered many educational scholarships to Sri Lankan students and several MoUs have already been signed between different universities and institutions from both sides. The Government of Pakistan has announced to award Jinnah Educational Scholarships to high scoring Sri Lankan students.



Pakistan announces prestigious Jinnah Scholarships-2016 for Sri Lankan Youth

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

During the past 10 years, scholarships of more than Rs. 40 million have been awarded for promoting bright Sri Lankan students.<sup>5</sup> According to Professor Sarath Amunugama of Sri Lanka, “this scholarship programme has assisted students from all communities for the past 10 years to create better professionals



for the future benefit of Sri Lanka.” These scholarships are awarded based on a strict criterion ensuring merit and need for financial assistance.<sup>6</sup> Every successful student receives a stipend for one year to continue the pursuit of their academic excellence. Under this prestigious programme, hundreds of Sri Lankan students of O-Level and A-Level have been awarded educational scholarships to date.

In addition to Jinnah Educational Scholarships, the Government of Pakistan offers the fully funded scholarships in the fields of Medicine, Engineering, Pharmacy and Dentistry to Sri Lankan students every year, to pursue higher professional education in Pakistan. Such programmes provide an opportunity to the students of both countries to study the general education system, TVET system, Youth Empowerment strategies in Sri Lanka and Pakistan with exposure to gain practical experience through exchanged visit programmes.<sup>7</sup>

In the same way, a MoU was signed for academic cooperation agreement on exchange and collaboration between the National Defence University (NDU) of Pakistan and Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies of Sri Lanka (LKIIRSS) on 7 April, 2015.<sup>8</sup> In this MoU, both institutes agreed to strengthen the existing responsive relations between the two countries considering the common interests in promoting collaboration in the relevant fields. Closer collaboration between both institutes will be beneficial in the field of academic research and other cooperative activities that will eventually contribute towards greater understanding between the two countries.

The purpose of this MoU was to enhance the relationship between the institutions through student exchange visits.<sup>9</sup> The host institution will provide briefing on current issues, hold workshops or symposia and coordinate arrangements for the visits. The NDU and LKIIRSS will also exchange publication materials and the collaboration will also be established through video links. This project will remain in force initially for a period of five years. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to both institutions and countries to benefit from it in terms of sharing strategies on how to cope with the menace of terrorism and in the rehabilitation process of the war-torn areas.<sup>10</sup>

In the field of informal education, an MoU was signed in 2012 between the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission of Sri Lanka and National Vocational and the Technical Education Commission of Pakistan. In 2013, Sri Lanka offered assistance in training personnel in gem and jewellery sectors, which was welcomed by Pakistan. On 18 January 2015, a Sri Lankan business delegation visited Pakistan to explore the opportunities for promotion of TVET. During this visit, it was stated that both countries could learn from each other and this would boost mutual opportunities further. It is, therefore, much needed that both countries should work more on promoting such kind of visits and devise a comprehensive strategy for promoting informal training programmes. Such trainings will not only help both countries to enhance the technical skills of the young people but also enable them to utilise this skilled manpower in a beneficial way.<sup>11</sup>

The procedure of development and enhancement of reciprocal relations in different fields of collaboration was further boosted, when former Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari visited Sri Lanka in November 2010.<sup>12</sup> Recognising the immense potential that exists in the two countries to tap knowledge as a driver of economic and social advancement, the two leaders agreed that both countries should enhance links in the educational sector. The initiative by Pakistan to set up a Chair on Urdu and Pakistan Studies in a Sri Lankan university was, therefore, welcomed.<sup>13</sup> This important step taken by the Pakistani government is highly appreciable as it will harness long term opportunities for Pakistan.

Language plays an important role in bringing the people of two countries closer to each other. When people interact with their counterparts in their own language, the understanding of each other's problems and policies will be at ease.<sup>14</sup> In this regard, Urdu Language Centre named after Baba-e-Urdu Maulvi Abdul Haq, has been established in Colombo to impart language training to Pakistani, Sri Lankan and other expatriate students. It also promotes better understanding of Pakistan and its culture in Sri Lanka.

During the visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Colombo on 4 January 2016, new MoUs were signed including all the areas, where collaboration can be harnessed through more P2P contacts. Both

countries pledged to initiate such academic exchange programmes, where youth can easily travel between both countries.<sup>15</sup> Translating this idea into tangible reality to augment the existing ties between the two friendly nations, various discussions were held to continue cooperation in conducting training and exchange programmes between the two countries by introducing modern technologies.

International youth exchange programmes help a nation to connect with people of other ethnicities and cultures through educational, professional, or cultural activities. It necessitates the need to foster training modules in scholarship exchange programmes. Moreover, apart from connecting people from different backgrounds into one circle, these programmes also create opportunities in various phases of learning, starting from participation in different activities, to work with others to solve shared problems and ensure secure future.<sup>16</sup>

These exchange programmes help to shape up future leadership; enable to instinctively appreciate the value of international collaboration, understanding, and empathy. In this regard, the leadership of two countries initiated concerted efforts to implement programmes relating to research and technology for the benefit of coming generation through students exchange programmes. As both countries have faced insurgencies in their respective circumstances, they can collaborate and learn from each other's experience in the field of research not only to overcome such menace, but finding a way out leading to the rehabilitation phase. They can focus on distance education in the war stricken areas as Sri Lanka has already completed the rehabilitation phase successfully. Pakistan can benefit from Sri Lankan experience; how to absorb the militants into the mainstream specially by promoting education in the areas that have been under such turmoil.

Pakistan has a number of universities with modern research facilities in the fields of Applied Physics, Industrial Chemistry, Bio-technology, Genetic Engineering, Information Technology and Management Sciences, etc. Pakistani universities can accommodate more number of Sri Lankan students in these diverse fields of advanced education. Pakistan has the realisation of benefits it can accrue and subsequently offer to Sri Lanka by extending support to their government in the field of education.



A 10-member student delegation from Abbotabad, Pakistan visit to Sri Lanka under Pakistan-Sri Lanka Youth Exchange Programme

**Source:** [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16B/Oct13\\_1476365903CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16B/Oct13_1476365903CH.php)

There is also a need that Pakistan should realise how it can take benefit from the human resource and fertile minds of Sri Lankan people, who think and act innovatively. In education sector, the purpose can be achieved by applying effective methodologies of learning and teaching in various fields; higher education studies, vocational training, specialisation in IT, etc. This support programme can also be extended by Pakistan keeping in mind the enormous potential that Pakistan can offer to Sri Lankan students in the field of education.

Collaboration in education can also be utilised keeping in view political as well as strategic importance. Strategically, when the Sri Lankan students would come to Pakistan for higher education in some of the top ranking Pakistani institutions and universities, they will be indulged in higher echelons and policy making institutions. On their return, they would be in a position to understand Pakistan's policies in a better way, hence the students of both countries will be able to take the relationship to the new glories with shared wisdom and common understanding. Strategic and political benefits go hand in hand. Another field, where a great potential of collaboration lies, is the exchange programme for parliamentarians. Pakistan is in a dire need of preparing a programme for the professional training of parliamentarians to instil vision of conceiving and making policies

that showcase Pakistan as the moderate and peace loving country. They can learn from the Sri Lankan experience during the time of insurgency, where Sri Lanka remained a democratic country, and all the important decisions were taken by the civil government.



Six Member Youth Delegation Visit to Islamabad for Peace and Harmony

**Source:** Sri Lankan High Commission

The lessons that parliamentarians can learn from the testing time in Sri Lanka is how to take difficult decisions in critical times. In this respect, both countries can work together to arrange conferences and seminars to learn from each other's experiences. As both countries have gone through similar situations in fighting insurgency and militancy, in Pakistan's case, it is still not over, the achievements of Sri Lankan Army can be taught as a case study (operations undertaken by the Sri Lankan Army that can also be applied in war torn areas of Pakistan especially in rehabilitation phase) in military institutions to get more benefits.

Pakistan is facing enormous challenges in terms of economic uncertainty, mainly caused by ongoing threats to national security, and a flecked image overseas. To meet these challenges, Pakistan government requires smart power strategies to rebuild strong international partnerships. This can be done by enabling foreign students, teachers, scholars, and citizens interface with Pakistani society and people through exchange programmes, and also allowing

Pakistani citizens to experience foreign communities and citizens in the same way.



Major General Ghulam Qamar, Director General ISSRA, NDU (standing in second row) participating in Defence Seminar-2012 in Sri Lanka

**Source:** Sri Lankan Army

That would prove beneficial for Pakistan to build warm and cordial relations with the world. It is a known fact, verified by a number of research endeavours, that foreign exchange participants have a better impression of their host country and its people after completing their studies or programmes. It is the most useful catalyst for establishing long-term political harmony and mutual understanding. The students, who are selected to study in another country will be exposed to the values, norms, customs, social and cultural ethics of their host country and will be able to share their part for creating deep rooted understanding and ply the role of ambassadors of their countries. In turn, the communities, who host the youth exchange programmes build international partnerships and gain deeper understanding of foreign cultures and values. Students learn the cardinal attributes of leadership and diplomacy through such programmes.

By fostering collaboration on issues such as national security, global economics and trade, energy, climate change, terrorism, and nuclear non-proliferation, exchange programmes create generations of leaders with contacts and experience around the globe. Leaders, who understand the significance and importance of widespread engagement and understanding can instinctively incorporate the

international agreed norms into their everyday life and work. Apart from collaboration in the field of university student and teacher exchange programmes, both countries should focus to devise a strategy for cadet exchange programme as well to enable the future military leadership think alike and work in close harmony, and maintaining the respect for each other.

### ***Culture***

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of understanding and familiarity with a particular group of people, defined by language, religious beliefs, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. Cultural relations are always considered important while strengthening the political relations between the states. Cultural and social relations are both narrower and broader than the interaction of national interests. Instead of power, security, or monetary considerations, cultural affairs are products of intangible factors such as nation's ideas, opinions, moods and tastes, symbols, words, and gestures that reflect people's thought and behaviour patterns comprising their cultural vocabulary in conditions, they relate themselves to other people.

The historical links between Pakistan and Sri Lanka are deep rooted, as many places and archaeological sites in Taxila, show the civilisation links between the two countries. These historical sites also show that in the past there was a linguistic and cultural connection between the people of ancient times, which was the manifestation of great Gandhara Civilisation. These historical linkages were established between the people of the Buddhist minority living in Pakistan and the Muslim minority residing in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. Though, the relations were old, but still the presence of these minority groups in both countries is the testimony of historical linkages.<sup>17</sup> The promotion of these cultural linkages was quite discernible, when, in 1950, Pakistan participated in the first Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists that was held in Sri Lanka. Subsequently, Pakistan celebrated the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lord Buddha in 1956. Indeed, Pakistan was the first country to do so.

Moreover, under the guidance of Pakistan's government, sacred Hair Relics of Lord Buddha were presented by Ven. Dipankar Sriinjan Mahathero, the then President of Chittagong Buddhist Association

and Chief Abbot of Chittagong Buddhist Monastery to Sri Lankan government. The ceremony was held in Karachi in 1958. The sacred Hair Relics were placed in a stupa in Madampe, Sri Lanka. Consequently, a high powered national committee was set up in Sri Lanka to celebrate Quaid-i-Azam's birthday. Later on, in December 1976, a public ground in Colombo was named as 'Jinnah Maidan' by Colombo Municipal Council. Further to regulate social collaboration between two nations, a few social orders and commissions, were set up. Remarkably, to advance cultural and social relations, Pakistan-Ceylon Cultural Society was shaped up in March 1954 with Sri Lanka's Minister of Finance Sir Oliver Gonnellilleke as its first President.

The Gandhara civilisation was not only the center of spiritual influence, but also the cradle of the world famous Gandhara culture, art and learning. The two countries have an agreement for cultural cooperation. It, however, expresses commitment of both countries in the fields of arts, culture, creative studies, archaeology, education, information and media collaboration. The countries can ensue tremendous results in political and economic fields, if the cultural cooperation starts and increases between them. Considering the importance of cultural relations, a delegation of 40 senior Buddhist



Sri Lankan delegation visit to historic Buddhist site at Takht-i-Bahi, Pakistan.

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

monks and scholars from Sri Lanka arrived in Pakistan for a week-long visit as a part of an initiative of the efforts aimed at introducing the



people of Sri Lanka to Pakistan's rich Buddhist history and reviving the heritage of Pakistan's Gandhara Trail.



Sri Lankan Delegation with Governor Punjab, Pakistan.

**Source:** <http://www.asiantribune.com/node/88862>

In order to be part of the most important annual Vesak Buddhist Festival falling on 21 May 2016, the Government of Pakistan provided the most sacred relics of Lord Buddha to Sri Lanka for exposition throughout Sri Lanka. The exposition was organised on the request of the Sri Lankan government under the bilateral cooperation agreement in the field of Culture. For the cultural promotion, exchange of such delegations is much needed; only then people can relate themselves on both sides with each other.<sup>18</sup>



Exposition of Lord Buddha's Relics sent by Pakistan in Sri Lankan.

**Source:** Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

One of the most important tools of projecting and promoting culture is media. Pakistan and Sri Lanka can use this tool to promote P2P interaction through exchange of artists, music and cultural programmes. Although, some agreements have been signed between Ministry of Information of Pakistan and Sri Lanka, but there is still an opportunity to do more in this regard.



Pakistani envoy in Sri Lanka visit to Central Province to bolster cultural links

**Source:** [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_13B/Jul26\\_1374844499CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13B/Jul26_1374844499CH.php)

### *Tourism*

The two sides are insightful of the requirement for more prominent coordinated efforts in the tourism sector, which would improve more noteworthy P2P contacts with specific prominence on religious tourism.<sup>19</sup> Sri Lanka and Pakistan are investigating the likelihood of expanding air connections to encourage tourism and business. The accentuation was on making an interpretation of the strategies vigorously and encouraging the support of the private segment to understand the objectives of the MoU, signed between two countries for the purpose.

To promote tourism, the South Asian Travel Commission was set up in 1956 with Sri Lanka and Pakistan. To encourage more linkage including advancing tourism, Sri Lanka and Pakistan built up direct air joins between Colombo-Islamabad and Colombo-Lahore. In like manner, SriLankan Airlines began its operations in 1980 with three

week-by-week flights to Pakistan and later have extended its recurrence to a day-by-day flight from Karachi to Colombo. Correspondingly, PIA flew two flights week-by-week from Islamabad to Colombo. Strangely, in February 2011, when 10<sup>th</sup> ICC Cricket World Cup was facilitated by Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh, PIA dispatched a unique advancement to urge Pakistanis to fly into Colombo to witness the World Cup matches. In 2010, Pakistan government chose to return Buddhist tourism on track keeping in mind the end goal to pull in Buddhist vacationer from Sri Lanka and other Southeast Asian nations.<sup>20</sup>

Sri Lanka has the most fluctuating atmospheres. At sea level, temperatures can take off to 80°F (29°C), however, three or four hours' drive inland, one can be in the sloping terrain, where temperatures drop to around 50°F (10°C). The highlands, where the cooler atmosphere and green mountains secured with lavish tea plants and falling waterfalls liberally give a complete occasion, free of the hurly-burly of city life. Normally, a different atmosphere implies a wide assortment of luxuriance, extending from the coconut palms that whisper along the never-ending white shorelines to the rhododendrons that cover the tumbling waterfalls in the higher areas; from elephants to hogs and bears and feathered creatures of such a variety of animal categories.

Sri Lanka offers a wide collection of entertainment, which ranges from worldwide chain of hotels to informal guest houses. Many people in Pakistan and outside show their eagerness to go for a trip in Europe, while the scenic beauty in Sri Lanka has its own impact. Another important tourist spot is Adam's Peak, which has equally important religious significance for Buddhists, Christians and Muslims, therefore, Sri Lanka can also generate revenue from this site as well.

However, both states are in possession of immense potential to accommodate the tourists from the respective states. Sri Lanka can get benefit of its island beauty, while Pakistan has an opportunity to offer splendour tourist sites such as Gilgit-Baltistan region, Chitral district, Swat valley, Cholistan desert and Kalat district along with religious sites for which the Sri Lankans are eager to come. Pakistan has the

golden opportunity to earn through tourism by maintaining Buddhist religious sites in Taxila and Swat.<sup>21</sup> The Government of Pakistan may like to build guest houses near historic Buddhist sites so that people from Sri Lanka and all over the world can come to Pakistan to visit such places. Both countries need to reconsider visa policy for the tourists of both sides, for this purpose option of special tickets or tourist packages may be considered. Private sector of both countries can also be involved to promote tourism and encourage P2P contact.

### ***Sports***

Sports have been a great connection between the two states throughout the course of history. In cricket, particularly both states have played many matches against each other within states and outside the states. The best part is that loser and victors always ended the match with pleasant gestures, appreciating each other. Unfortunately, Lahore incident hampered the situation worse than ever. The Sri Lankan cricket team was attacked by the terrorists in 2007, while en route to play a test match at Qaddafi Stadium Lahore. Though, the team remained safe from any physical damage or injury, yet the tragedy closed the doors of international cricket to Pakistan. For Pakistan, in the field of cricket, Sri Lanka's positive attitude lessened the nuisance. People of both countries never forget the mesmerising moments of 1996 world cup played at Lahore. It was a huge jubilation in Pakistan over Sri Lankan historic win against Australia.

The leadership on both sides believe that sports is a way to bring people together on both sides, and above all, cricket is the strongest bond that has never weakened between the two states even after the attack on the Sri Lankan team in Pakistan. The Indian as well as the Western media openly criticised Pakistan's internal security situation that resulted in ban of international cricket in Pakistan. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, stayed positive despite the Lahore incident. Otherwise, every other country took stand against Pakistan resulted in disappearance of its domestic cricket from the scenario. At present, the situation has improved a lot and is acknowledged by ICC itself recently. Pakistan Super League (PSL) is another important initiative that brings international players together to play for Pakistani teams. Sri Lankan players are also part of this glorious event.



General Pervez Musharraf greets Sanath Jayasuriya, Captain of the Sri Lankan Cricket Team at Rawalpindi Stadium

**Source:** Sri Lankan High Commission

Frequent organisation of the bilateral sports competition promotes P2P interaction in diverse ways. It allows the spectators from both sides to visit the other country that increases tourism on both sides. It helps in understanding the cultural aspects and way of living at both sides. It also encourages to exchange sport skills between the players of both countries and increases the opportunities of mutual business and trade. In this regard, several sports events have been organised to promote the culture of sports in both countries. The prominent sports events include Sports Gala being organised by the Sri Lanka-Pakistan Friendship Association, in collaboration with Pakistan High Commission, Colombo on regular basis. The Sports Gala featured number of activities including cricket matches for men, women and children teams and various other interesting activities such as Tug of War and Breaking the Pot, etc. In 2016, both countries have also witnessed a number of visits of Pakistani sports teams including the Pakistan Army Hockey Team, the Pakistan Army Volleyball Team, and the Pakistan Airforce Football Team to Sri Lanka. These events provide ample opportunities for sporting interactions in order to advance excellent relations between the two countries.



Pakistan Army Hockey Team visit to Colombo in December 2016.

Source: Pakistan High Commission, Colombo

## **Conclusion**

Pakistan and Sri Lanka are mindful that the true harvest of the amity and bilateral relation can only be brought about through P2P interaction. However, bearing that in mind, both sides are incapacitated to promote it in an agreeably congenial manner. Although, in the times, when the world has already become a global village, the role of media must not be negated. Pakistan and Sri Lanka can equally use this tool to endorse P2P interaction through exchange of artists, music and cultural programmes. In this regard, several MoUs and agreements have already been sealed promptly by both sides. Whereas, the implementation of these MoUs and agreements is still an unsolved riddle and is visibly questionable beyond the shadow of any doubt.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Brass, Paul R., ed. *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal*. Routledge, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Madan, Triloki Nath. *Muslim Communities of South Asia: Culture, Society, and Power*. Vol. 6. Manohar Publishers, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Bose, Sugata, and Ayesha Jalal. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. Psychology Press, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Bass, Daniel. *Everyday Ethnicity in Sri Lanka: Up-country Tamil Identity Politics*. Routledge, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> "Pakistan- Sri Lanka Friendship Magazine". June 2011. Accessed online <http://www.slhcpakistan.org/newletter/2011-may-june.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Pakistan, Sri Lanka ties stronger by six MoUs". *Pakistan Today*. April 7, 2015. Accessed online <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/04/07/national/pakistan-sri-lanka-ties-stronger-by-six-mous/>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> "Collaboration opportunities between Sri Lanka and Pakistan to promote technical education and vocational learning". *Tamil Diplomat*. January 18, 2015. Accessed online <http://tamildiplomat.com/sri-lanka-and-pakistan-collaboration-for-tech-education/>.

<sup>12</sup> "President Zardari arrives in Sri Lanka on four-day state visit". *Daily Dawn*. NOV 27, 2010. Accessed online <http://www.dawn.com/news/586270/president-zardari-arrives-in-sri-lanka-on-four-day-state-visit>.

<sup>13</sup> Joint Statement of Pakistan-Sri Lanka during President Asif Ali Zardari's visit to Colombo in November 2010. Accessed online <http://www.mfa.gov.lk/index.php/media/news-archive/2593-sri-lanka-pakistan-joint-statement>.

<sup>14</sup> "Pakistan and Sri Lanka agrees to promote bilateral high level partnership". *Asian Tribune*. December 1, 2010. Accessed online <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/12/01/pakistan-and-sri-lanka-agrees-promote-bilateral-high-level-partnership>.

<sup>15</sup> "PM Nawaz arrives in Sri Lanka for three-day official visit". *The Express Tribune*. January 4, 2016. Accessed online <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1021616/pm-nawaz-leaves-for-three-day-official-visit-to-sri-lanka/>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> "Pakistan Sri Lanka Continue to Enjoy Excellent Relations: Pak Envoy". *The Democrat News*. February 1, 2016. Accessed online <http://www.thedemocrate.com/?p=4990>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Marshall, Sir John Hubert. *Taxila: An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations*. Cambridge University Press, 1951.

<sup>20</sup> "Pakistan- Sri Lanka Friendship Magazine". June 2011. Accessed online <http://www.slhcpakistan.org/newletter/2011-may-june.pdf>.

*Pakistan-Sri Lanka Relations: A Story of Friendship*

<sup>21</sup> Ali, Ihsan, and Robin Coningham. "Recording and Preserving Gandhara's Cultural Heritage." *Culture Without Context* 3 (1998): 10-16.



# Way Forward



## Way Forward

Historically, Pakistan–Sri Lanka relations are thousands of years old dating back to the time of the Gandhara Civilisation. Ever since Pakistan's inception, the two countries have emerged as time tested friends in the South Asian region.

Important areas of relations are mainly political, defence, economic and socio-cultural. Political and defence relations are exemplary, nevertheless, the economic potential has not been fully harnessed. As much as the historical ties may have been flourishing, the two countries have many avenues through which they can further cement their relations in the future.

Sri Lanka was able to eliminate terrorism in the island with the assistance from countries such as Pakistan. However, information about the cooperation and assistance, Pakistan extended to Sri Lanka during the LTTE insurgency, is confined to military circles. Civilians are not aware of this generous behaviour of the Pakistanis. The culmination of the conflict does not allude Pakistan to be a lesser partner in Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy, and a reduction in the military significance does not indicate that Sri Lanka's relations with Pakistan cannot further foster in the future.

Pakistan admires Sri Lanka's achievements from 2009, and considers it the type of action states should pursue in eliminating terrorism. There are lessons, Pakistan can learn from the Sri Lankan experience, especially from its counterterrorism strategies. The dedicated Sri Lankan civil and military leadership that decided to eliminate terrorism is the most important. Secondly, the support and collaboration between the civil and military leadership. Thirdly, the advantage of the geographical environment. Interestingly, Pakistan is following a similar strategy in shape of Operation Zarb-e-Azb against the militants. Pakistan can benefit from the Sri Lankan experience of combating militancy and this can be absorbed via joint military exercises, which can further solidify relations. Focus should be on the counter insurgency operations and small group operations. Therefore, selected officers from Pakistan and Sri Lanka must visit each other.

South Asia is a diverse region, particularly due to its rich history, cultures and religions. In addition to this diversity, the region also has various power-plays. However, regardless of these changing dynamics, Pakistan is confident that the growing Indian hegemony in the region will not have an impact on the mutual relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Mrs. Bandaranaike accorded approval to meet Pakistan's requirements to refuel aircrafts in 1971. This can be understood as a unique posture from the Sri Lankan side in the most critical moments in Pakistan's history. General Zia's reciprocity against the LTTE in 1980s was an act of acknowledgement of the Sri Lankan support for Pakistan in 1971. Colombo publicly backed Islamabad's stance on the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan apart from playing an important role in restoring Pakistan's membership to the Commonwealth.

It is noteworthy of mention that despite instability in Sri Lanka, democracy was not side-lined. This ascertains that success in the battlefield cannot be achieved unless a state is politically, diplomatically and militarily strong.

In terms of economic progress, the two countries have shown some advancement. However, this development is not satisfactory, when considering the potential of the two countries in terms of the avenues of trade they can embark on. The economic potential of both sides led the leadership of the two countries to align in the domain of trade through a FTA, which has been broadened via the signing of various MoUs in several spheres in January 2016. The opening of a Commercial Office at the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo, to facilitate businessmen of both countries is also a major step in advancing the mutual ties between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Unfortunately, the current trade volume does not reflect the true potential, as Pakistan and Sri Lanka are not the top destinations of each other's exports. The volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, has increased from US \$ 200 million to US \$ 324 million during 2014-15. However, there is no clarity about the mechanism to enhance bilateral trade up to US \$ 1 billion as proclaimed by the officials in 2016. There are several potential areas for mutual collaboration in

the sphere of economics such as the establishment of a knowledge corridor between the two countries along with sharing information in science and technology and agriculture, etc.

Further, it was identified that the dividends from the FTA should be enjoyed by both countries. In this context, the exchange of representatives from the Chambers of Commerce and Industries must be a routine. Furthermore, the exchange of visits by agriculture experts, technicians, researchers and management personnel should be encouraged. It is also imperative to conduct workshops and symposia; such as:

- Cooperation in Agro-processing;
- Phytosanitary and Quarantine procedures enabling export of farm production to each other's country;
- Cooperation in manufacturing, maintenance and service of farm machinery;
- Collaboration and cooperation in terms of establishing operational model for agricultural cooperation;
- Promoting agricultural trade between the two countries;
- Collaborative actions on human resource development, including short term measures focused on training programmes, post-graduate degree programmes, and exchange visits of farmers of both sides;
- Collaborative research and development programmes related to biotechnology; plant breeding using molecular techniques and diseases diagnostics in crops; and
- Exchanges and cooperation between the industrial and commercial circles of the two sides in various economic activities in accordance with the principle of equality and mutual benefit.

In the academic sphere, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have not established strong links between their universities and research institutions. The establishment of links between such institutions could harness stronger research collaboration and relations between these two

states. There is a need for solidification of relations through exchange of eminent scholars, academics, students, and representatives from think-tanks and media. Thus, the promotion of short courses, joint research projects and activities in teaching of faculties of mutual interest is an important endeavour.

The strategic interests of the two countries are based on friendship, with P2P contact. There is a spiritual connection related to Buddhism, with the Gandhara Civilisation (Taxila), which is underutilised. Pakistan has a great edge in developing the country's tourism in addition to its links with Sri Lanka. The two countries need to take tangible steps to enhance air and sea connectivity including joint ventures between their respective shipping corporations. Towards this end, direct flights between Colombo and Islamabad need to be facilitated to promote religious tourism. The strengthening of this aspect of relations between the countries can provide a further stepping stone for P2P contact. Tourism, which can be developed by both private and public sectors, is an area the two countries can work on in the future.

Although, a goodwill for such contacts in the form of exchange programmes and exhibitions exists at both sides, but these socio-cultural relations can be furthered via joint ventures in filmmaking, dramas and cultural programmes. It is the duty of the citizens and all-concerned to ensure that there is sufficient positive coverage of each other in media, in order to create a positive attitude.

There is much misperception about Pakistan being a fundamental religious state, mainly due to the lack of accurate information. Pakistan's image, as a progressive nation along with achievements to combat terrorism and contribution in war against terrorism, have not been projected in the Sri Lankan media. There is an information gap about the societal structure of Pakistan and advancement of Pakistan in various fields. This gap needs to be filled though effective media outreach from Pakistan. Towards this end, Pakistan must exchange plays, movies and other cultural programmes to project itself as a progressive and moderate country, devoid of extremist and theological inkling, to counter negative propaganda.

Intrinsically, modern dynamics of Pakistan–Sri Lanka relations have evolved over time as a result of their common perceptions

and ground realities in the realm of geopolitical and geostrategic development at the national, regional and global level.

While adopting a pragmatic policy, Pakistan and Sri Lanka can further march towards prosperity domestically and emerge as powerful sovereign states to voice their view at both regional and international fora. Sri Lanka and Pakistan are members of several international organisations and could work together in the future for global peace and stability.

Despite its geographical distance, Pakistan–Sri Lanka are close friends. Both states have an implicit desire to not only maintain the existing relations, but to go beyond the present status focusing on strategic partnership in areas of mutual interest. There is no trust deficit between the two countries, therefore, they can start a strategic dialogue immediately.

In a nutshell, both nations cannot disregard the difficult times in their history and the support provided by each other during such times. Sri Lanka can greatly benefit from the CPEC, as this trade-route can provide Sri Lankan companies access to landlocked regions such as Afghanistan and the Central Asia. Sri Lankan commodities can find appropriate space through this project apart from the promotion of tourism. Pakistan too can utilise Sri Lanka's central position in the Indian Ocean to channel their commodities to the Middle and Far East. These measures will definitely put the way forward.





## Notes on Contributors



**Colonel Dr. Muhammad Saif-ur-Rehman**, TI(M) was commissioned in Pakistan Army (Education Corps) in 1990 after having graduated in the disciplines of Economics and Pakistan Studies. He has served on various staff and instructional appointments besides a longer tenure as an analyst in the Ministry of Defence. Dr. Saif was awarded Doctoral degree in 2008 by Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad on specialising “Political Economy of Central Asia.” Besides being focal person on research in ISSRA, he was also the Editor of Margalla Papers; an annual publication of NDU. Presently, he is serving as Deputy Director Human Resource Development, GHQ, Rawalpindi.



**Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Basit** was granted commission in Pakistan Army (Education Corps) in June 1990. He has done M.Phil. in Distance and Non-Formal Education, Masters in English, and Masters in Educational Administration. The officer has had a versatile blend of experience in his professional pursuit, which includes staff and instructional appointments. He has a singular credit to teach the subject of English at Pakistan Military Academy, College of Army Education, and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He remained as Directing Staff (Language) at Command and Staff College, Quetta and Deputy Director (Publication) in ISSRA, NDU. He has also authored a book “Communication Skills,” which is being taught as textbook in Human Resource Development Centres. He had also been the Editor of NDU Journal, an annual publication of NDU, Islamabad.



**Dr. Shaheen Akhtar** is a PhD in International Relations. She is currently working as Associate Professor and Head of International Relations Department, Faculty of Contemporary Studies (FCS) at NDU, Islamabad. Her area of interest is non-traditional security issues with particular

reference to Kashmir, and Sri Lanka. She has authored over sixty research articles. She was a Visiting Fellow at Shanghai Institute for International Studies, Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Sri Lanka, Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington D.C. and Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Hawaii, USA. She has participated in numerous international seminars, workshops and conferences focusing on the regional affairs. She is the Editor of Journal of Contemporary Studies, a biannual publication of FCS, NDU, Islamabad.



**Professor Amal Jayawardane** is an Emeritus Professor of International Relations, University of Colombo who is presently serving as a Senior Professor at the Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies, KDU. He previously served as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Head of the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo.

He was appointed the Executive Director (2008-2011) of the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) which is a Regional Think-Tank in South Asia. Since 2013 he has been serving as Sri Lanka Government's Representative to the ARF Experts and Imminent Persons (ARF-EEP) Group. He is a Member of the Boards of Management of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS) and the Regional Centre for Strategic studies (RCSS). He has also served as Visiting Professor at the School of International Service, the American University, Washington D.C., and Research Scholar at the Department of International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science. He obtained his B.A. from University of Ceylon and M.A., Ph.D. from the University of Washington.



**Colonel Chandana Wickramasinghe** is a professional military officer cum multi-disciplinary researcher in international research specialising in Geopolitics, Strategic Studies and National Security. Currently serving as the Brigade Commander of the 511 Brigade in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, he was the former Dean of the Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies, KDU, where he was also the first Research Coordinator of the Department of Strategic Studies. He holds an MA in International Relations from University of Colombo and has Passed Staff College

(psc) Course from Defence Services Command and Staff College, Sapugaskanda in 2001. He is reading for his MPhil/PhD at KDU in International Relations with special focus on the National Security of Sri Lanka. He was awarded Asia's Education Leadership Award 2015 at the Asia's Education Excellence Awards held in Singapore in 2015. He conducts lectures on the USA Homeland Security, National Security, Geopolitics, Leadership, personality development and soft skills.



**Dr. Sithara Fernando** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Strategic Studies, Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies, KDU, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka. He has been awarded the Kodikara Award for South Asian Strategic Studies by the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Colombo, Sri Lanka. He has also been awarded the Symposium on East Asia Security (SEAS) Fellowship by the Daniel K. Inouye-Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies (DKI-APCSS), Hawaii, USA. He has published in international refereed journals *China Report*, *Strategic Analysis* and *Insight on Africa*. His areas of research interest include geopolitics, major powers in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), comprehensive maritime security and maritime security cooperation.



**Bhagya Senaratne** is a lecturer in the Department of Strategic Studies, Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies, KDU. She completed both her Master of Arts in International Relations and her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Colombo. She also completed several diplomas on international relations, diplomacy and media studies. She contributes extensively to both local and international publications and her most recent work appeared in the *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* (Routledge, 2016) and in *Maritime Safety and Security in Indian Ocean* (Vij Publications, 2016). An alumnus of the Ship for World Youth Programme organised by the Cabinet Office of Japan, she has also represented Sri Lanka in numerous international fora. She is presently reading for her MPhil leading to a PhD at the University of Colombo. Her research interests include Diplomacy, Strategic Communication, Foreign Policy and Sri Lanka's role in the Indian Ocean Region.



**Asantha Senevirathna** is currently a lecturer in the Department of Strategic Studies at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. He holds a B.A. (Hons.) in Geography from the University of Peradeniya and an M. A. in International Relations from the University of Colombo. He was a recipient of “Knowing China” Programme on the invitation of the Chinese People Association for Peace and Disarmament (CPAPS) in 2011 held in People’s Republic of China. Prior to joining the KDU he worked as the Programme Officer of International Relations Division at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS). His research interests include Geopolitics, India-Sri Lanka Relations, Rise of China, the United Nations in Global Security, Human Security and Transnational Security Issues.



**Sanath De Silva** is a lecturer at the Department of Strategic Studies, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU). Prior to his appointment at the KDU he served as the Research Coordinator at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS) Colombo. He is an alumni of the Near East South Asia (NESA) Network of Strategic Studies Centers, National Defence University (NDU) Washington DC and Asia Pacific Center for Strategic Studies (APCSS) Honolulu, Hawaii. He is presently reading for his MPhil leading to PhD at the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo. His research interests are Nuclear Non-Proliferation and History of Warfare.



**PAKISTAN - SRI LANKA RELATIONS: A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP**



**National Defence University**  
**Sector E-9 Islamabad**  
**Pakistan**  
**[www.ndu.edu.pk](http://www.ndu.edu.pk)**

