

## EDITORIAL

With every issue, we hope to be able to report that the Ukraine and Gaza wars are over. So far, this hope has been belied. Apart from the massive loss of life, these wars are raising issues that are not novel. On 3rd September 2024, the European Union chastised Mongolia for not arresting the Russian President Vladimir Putin when he paid a state visit there. The EU official maintained that the Russian President had been declared a “war criminal” by the International Court of Justice to which Mongolia is also beholden.

The ICC has also declared that the actions taken by Israel in Gaza constitute Genocide, but this did not prevent Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from proceeding abroad. Instead of being arrested on American soil, he was allowed to address the United States Congress (to standing ovation). Any law selectively applied becomes redundant; especially in view of the campus demonstrations against Israel. Mongolia may have been errant, but it displayed its sovereignty, a feature lacking elsewhere.

At home, on the same day, members of the National Assembly debated a proposal to bring barren land measuring 4.8 million acres spread in all four provinces as well as Gilgit and Baltistan under cultivation. The proposal was opposed due to fear that this proposal would involve diversion of already scarce water, away from the old to the new pastures. A way out can be recourse to the Water Sprinkler System developed in Karachi by a German pharmaceutical firm in the mid 1990’s. A sophisticated valve enables rationing of water. It was a successful experiment in the Bhinder district of Balochistan. The agricultural community found the initial cost high, but in the long run the water sprinkler system assures at least three harvests in place of one. Since the state itself is going ahead with Co-operative Farming, initial outlay need not to be a hindrance. Jordan and other countries in the Middle East have used it profitably, there is no reason why Pakistan, the country in which the system was developed, cannot profit from it.

In this issue we offer the reader a paper on “A Note on the Spatial Concept of Offerings and Belongings recently reported from the Ancient Cemetery of Thamuniak Broze, Chitral, Pakistan”. This is a study of

funerary art in the Gandhara region, which shall be of immense interest. The next article: “Contemporary Artisans sculpting Artefacts: A Case Study of Taxila Valley” highlights the practising of producing counterfeits of ancient sculptures. Why? This should be made clear in this paper otherwise souvenirs from the world archaeology sites are tourist attractions and should be sold as such. This article serves the purpose of alerting tourists to the fear that the ancient piece they purport to buy may not be so.

The third paper is on “Vineyard Cultivation in Kashmir – A historical Examination of Dogra Era Agriculture”. This brings us to an often-neglected aspect of Kashmir’s history and demonstrating how values and sustenance can be at odds. The economic imperatives of Kashmiri agriculture are etched quite clearly. Although we do not carry a paper on Swat in this issue, we do have an extensive paper charting social transformation in the Dir State. “An Analysis of Social Conditions and Transformation in the Dir State (1925-1969)”. Lastly, we have a paper on a legendary journalist: “Zafar Ali Khan (1873-1956) A Creative Genius among Freedom-Fighters” show the travails journalists undergo to achieve the same results as political leaders, but without the reward accruing to successful revolutionaries.

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