

she researches his use of Khadi, the crusade against untouchability, the Dandi March and other campaigns against colonial laws, all as methods of unifying nationalistic support through an 'instrumental embrace of Gandhian tactics'. Jinnah's comparative reliance on a 'vague religious nationalism' while unifying only along specific lines (poor Muslims, landed aristocrats or zamindars, and pirs with committed followers), was one of the reasons for Pakistan's unsettled polity later, Tudor surmises. Tudor's description of the role of pirs is unique, recounting how they first helped Jinnah win elections in Punjab and Bengal that strengthened his case for a separate state, then convinced their followers in the United Provinces, Bihar, and Punjab to migrate to Pakistan, and finally, the role of the same pirs post-Partition in destabilizing elected governments.

Tudor's approach to the subject is academic, but her style makes this complex book easy reading. It is possible to differ with her conclusions that seem to damn Pakistan to an unstable polity forever, based on the past. It is also possible to see Tudor's work as heavily loaded in India's favour, with extreme pessimism about Pakistan's prospects of stability, even as she glosses over many of the contradictions in India's promise of democracy—the persistent inequalities, and suppression of divergent movements in Kashmir, the North-East and areas that Naxal groups operate in. Fortunately Tudor sticks, for the most part, to empirical facts and practical descriptions, and it is hard to fault her on the research she bases her argument on.

What really sets apart *The Promise of Power* is Tudor's anecdotal style in describing the

politics of the times from the 1930s to the 1950s. Her easy grasp of that period is clear from the way she builds her characters: from the Mahatma and Qaid, to other protagonists including Nehru, Bose, Suhrawardhy, Liaquat Ali Khan, Mirza and General Ayub. It includes delightful nuggets on how Sardar Patel would thrash out problems within the Indian Constituent Assembly (by going for big durbar-style walks in Delhi's Lodi Gardens), and a footnote on how in 1954, the Pakistan Governor-General Malik Ghulam Mohammad dismissed Prime Minister Bogra, with General Ayub Khan standing behind a curtain in the same room! Just four years later General Ayub forced Mohammed's successor Mirza to dismiss Prime Minister Noon, and then took over as President, while exiling Mirza from the country (the template for the more recent coup in Pakistan too).

If you read between Tudor's well-crafted lines, it is easy to see many events of today that tie into our subcontinental past: In the tussle between political parties and personalities (the cult of the 'high command') that continues to this day, In the pursuit of 'coalitions of convenience' with extremist groups in order to gain power (as well as sectarian, anti-Shi'a movements fuelling radicalism in Pakistan from the 1950s), in the struggle between principles and consensus deciding the constitutions of both countries, and in the resolution of linguistic divides in the country (The formation of Andhra vs the current chaos over Telengana and the creation of Bangladesh on the other side).

Finally there are the international extensions of this study. Tudor speaks of a 'fleeting window for institutionalization' for any country, with a cautionary tone for Pakistan in particular. The fact is that around the world, democracy is seldom a final, solid state of being, and is mostly just a work in progress. According to a study by the *Journal of Democracy*, of 100 countries in stages of upheaval between 1970 and 2000, only 20 became stable democracies. 5 relapsed into dictatorships (including Algeria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), while a staggering 75 were stuck somewhere in transition.

At a time when many question the relevance of democracy around the world (Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco), where the exit of dictatorial leaders and holding of elections have brought little by way of regime stability, Tudor's *The Promise of Power* is aptly titled. Because the dual promise of democracy: Justice and Equality remain an elusive promise in India and Pakistan. All that can be counted on is the promise of power, in all its fleeting glory.

Suhasini Haidar is Foreign Affairs Editor, CNN-IBN.

Understanding Pakistan

Arun Vishwanathan

As a new civilian government finds its feet following the historic transition of democratic power in Pakistan, it is important to carry out a holistic analysis of the multiple crises plaguing Pakistan. These range from a troubling internal security situation with rampant terrorist attacks to a crisis of governance to a slowing economy complicated by an energy crisis. In recent years, given the troubles plaguing Pakistan several scholars have outlined a pessimistic future for Pakistan that has ranged from implosion of the country, to its breaking up or 'Lebanonisation' to carving of an Islamic Emirate from within Pakistan's territory.

PAKISTAN: A NEW HISTORY

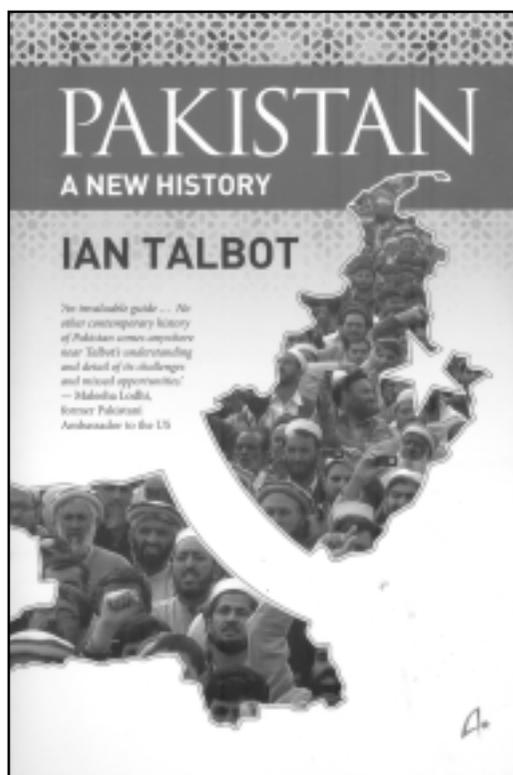
By Ian Talbot

Amaryllis, New Delhi, 2013, pp: x+311, ₹499.00

What makes Ian Talbot's book a great read is the fact that it chronologically and in great detail analyses the historical developments in Pakistan and highlights the turning points—beginning with the failure of the first democratic experiment in 1958—which have led Pakistan down the path it currently finds itself in. The strength and quality of Talbot's scholarship comes across given the fact that he engages with the spectrum of available scholarship on every issue whether it is the link between *madrassa* education and militancy or poor governance to uneven economic development. This coupled with Talbot's assessment of the strength and weaknesses of the reading of the issue by various scholars provides the reader with a well rounded understanding.

While reading the book one does encounter Talbot's masterly understanding of the country and his love for Pakistan and its people. It is probably this affection for the country which makes him more optimistic about the country's future vis-à-vis most other scholars who are all 'gloom and doom' when it comes to the future of Pakistan.

Talbot's book is a comprehensive attempt at understanding Pakistan in its entirety which includes details about its people, land and its society. The book is divided into eight chapters and begins with an essay titled 'Pakistan: Land, People and Society'. The excellent chapter is a great way to begin the book as it provides the reader with an overall



feel of the country. The chapter deals with the geopolitical situation Pakistan finds itself in, provides details of Pakistan's demography and the problems posed by the rapid growth of its population. Here Talbot also deals with the issue of migration both overseas as well as internal rural-urban migration. The issue of migration, overlooked by many, has important ramifications on the growing Wahhabi influence in Pakistan. Most analysis of growing Wahhabi influence in Pakistan tends to focus on Saudi Arabia's efforts to further the ideology. However, as the author points out (p. 29), the influence of 'migrant oil and construction workers who returned to Pakistan, not only with increased prosperity, but commitment to scriptural Islam in opposition to popular "folk-Islam"' is often overlooked.

Throughout the book, Talbot identifies the various interconnected strands to weave the story of Pakistan and its current situation. On one hand, Pakistan has a population which grows at over two percent which if left unchecked could result in a crisis in the future. On the other hand, it possesses an enormous demographic advantage with one of the largest youth populations in the world. The problem of population growth is related to Pakistan's poor achievements in educating its populace and in particular literacy among its women and is linked to prioritizing of defence expenditure over all other sectors. In Pakistan only about a third of adult women are literate. This figure drops to eighteen and three percent in areas such as the Frontier and Tribal Areas. The government's focus on education also suffers as a result of

Pakistan's historically low tax penetration of less than two percent. Talbot helps the reader understand the current crisis in Pakistan by tackling issues such as distribution of land holdings and the links therein to skewed development; the nature of political parties and political participation to the lack of strong presence of political parties at the grass-root level in large parts of Pakistan in the pre-Independence era. It is to Talbot's credit that he masterfully highlights such interconnected linkages thereby providing the reader with a better understanding of Pakistan.

With the second chapter onwards the book follows a detailed chronological account of Pakistan's troubled history. This begins with an analysis of the reasons behind the failure of Pakistan's first experiment with democracy that lasted from 1947 to 1958. The following chapters study Pakistan's swing back and forth from military rule to democracy. It begins with the martial rule under General Ayub to democratic rule under Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and back to military rule under Zia-ul-Haq to a transition to democracy under Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif between 1988-99 which was followed with the military coup by General Pervez Musharraf. The book ends with an analysis of President Asif Ali Zardari's tenure which was a watershed being the first democratically elected government to complete its full term.

The resolve shown by Pakistan's political parties—especially the current Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif—in ensuring that the Zardari government lasted its full term (despite several chances to topple it) displayed political foresight and statesmanship. The first ever democratic transition of power could be a silver lining in what is otherwise a bleak outlook. There is a feeling that Pakistan has a chance to turn a bend and begin clawing out of the crisis that currently plagues it. It remains to be seen whether Pakistan's leaders live up to the expectations of its people.

If you are going to draw up a list of books to read on Pakistan, I would unreservedly recommend that Ian Talbot's book *Pakistan: A New History* be at the top of your list. The book leaves the reader with a better understanding of the country and its people by seeking to uncover the historical, politico-socio-economic roots of Pakistan's current crises.

Arun Vishwanathan is Assistant Professor, International Strategic and Security Studies Programme, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. He can be contacted at: arun.vishwanathan@gmail.com

In Search of a Constitution

Sohan Prasad Sha

With the heightening of a heated nationalism debate, this book is a timely contribution to the constitution making process in Nepal. There has been no dearth of constitutions in Nepal with those of 1948, 1951, 1959, 1962, 1990 and 2007. Nepal has been going through a fresh constitutional crisis in recent years. The process of drafting the new constitution which started with the establishment of a popular Constituent Assembly failed in 2012, and presently another constituent assembly election is being sought. The book under review sheds interesting light on this process and unpacks the overall legacy of constitutionalism in Nepal and socio-political conflicts involved in the Constitution making processes through the case study of the 1990 Constitution.

The author argues for a framework and perspective that makes a strong case for constitutional ethnography in Nepal. Malagodi draws a parallel between 'Factual diversity-Formal equality' that existed in the making of the 1990 Constitution and in the post-1990 democratic context with regard to 'the

CONSTITUTIONAL NATIONALISM AND LEGAL EXCLUSION: EQUALITY, IDENTITY POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY IN NEPAL (1990-2007)

By Mara Malagodi
Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013,
pp. 316, ₹895.00

Nepali people' vis-à-vis 'the extremely diverse nature of Nepali society' (p. 8). Malagodi argues that the constitutional nationalism in Nepal was overtly or covertly complicit with legal exclusion. This duality often contradicted, as the 1990 Constitution progressively turned out to be like 'sword and scales' that vitiated the relationship between political power and legal justice and the ensuing exclusionary patterns (p. 48).

Malagodi examines the 1990 Constitution through the lens of historical institutionalist approach. This implied probing two core questions in relation to the Nepalese polity. First, 'why was that particular choice of institutionalization of the nation made in Nepal's 1990 Constitution-making process?' (p. 11). Second, 'what have been the implications of the particular choice of institutionalization of the Nepali nation in