

# 'We must not allow the Quaid's vision to die'

Fourth edition of  
*The Jinnah Anthology*  
launched

By Peerzada Salman

KARACHI: The fourth edition of *The Jinnah Anthology*, a book compiled and edited by Liaquat Merchant and Prof Sharif al Mujahid, was launched at a local hotel on Thursday evening.

Former High Commissioner of Pakistan to India Abdul Basit delivered the keynote address. He said we as a nation haven't done justice to Mr Jinnah's ideals. It's important to revert to the Quaid's ideals.

Mr Basit said in his 36 years of professional service as a diplomat he has found out that there is no country in the world that doesn't face problems. The cosmopolitan world is both integrating and fragmenting. But if we look at the global mosaic, we will see that while countries are cooperating [with one another], they are also in

confrontation. This confrontation has stymied the world order based on justice and equity. Despite many developments taking place, it is important for us to see how we can evolve a world order based on justice and equity.

Mr Basit said there are five fundamental issues that Pakistan is currently facing. The first is democratic deficit. It has led to political instability in the country because of which Pakistan has not been able to develop civilian institutions. It will take some

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FORMER high commissioner to India Abdul Basit speaks at the event.—White Star

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time for the civilian institutions to step up to the plate and deliver.

The second issue is that of the knowledge deficit. In the first 200 years of Islam, Muslim scholars focused more on metaphysics. It took them away from natural sciences. Today we have three or four streams of education in the country.

Third is economic stagnation. We don't know how to grapple with that. The economy is in dire straits, a huge challenge.

The fourth issue pertains to the Islam versus secularism debate. We keep swinging between the two, we are a confused people. It has held us back from achieving our real potential.

The fifth and last issue is our inconsistent foreign policy. We don't know what role to play in Afghanistan and what relationship to have with India. Inconsistencies in our foreign policy add to our national problems.

Mr Basit said he lived in India for four years. Living in that country tells us what a blessing Pakistan is. In India, every morning Muslims have to prove their patriotism. In Pakistan we must not allow the Quaid's vision to die.

Earlier, president of Jinnah Society

Liaquat Merchant welcoming the guests said it is not easy to understand Mr Jinnah; he was different to different people — he was a lawyer, Congress leader, Muslim League leader, a politician, a visionary, and the Quaid-i-Azam. He wanted Muslims to achieve political and economic independence, the latter, to date, remains a much-desired necessity.

Prof of History at FC College Lahore Dr Sikandar Hayat lauded the publication of the fourth edition of *The Jinnah Anthology* calling it an incredible achievement, no ordinary feat accomplished by two competent and devoted editors Liaquat Merchant and Prof Sharif al Mujahid.

Dr Hayat said there are 15 distinct sections in the book, and drew the attention of the audience to one of them — 'Original Essays on Jinnah'. A majority of essays in it are by important and reputed scholars — for example, the late Stanley Wolpert, Sharif al Mujahid, M.R. Kazimi, Ayesha Jalal, Sharifuddin Pirzada and Akbar S. Ahmed. However, he pointed out, a few of the essays are written by academics for whom Jinnah is not their field. In their place works of scholars such as Khalid bin Sayeed and Ian Talbot may have been accommodated.

Yasser Latif Hamdani, author of

*Jinnah: Myth and Reality*, said as a college student abroad in the late 1990s he was challenged by his Indian friends. The film *Gandhi* had an acerbic effect on him and he found Mr Jinnah's demonization in the movie repulsive. In 2005 he became a lawyer because of Mr Jinnah.

Mr Hamdani said Mr Jinnah wasn't born on March 23, 1940. He had made immense contribution to India, one of which was his role in the Dehradun Military Academy.

Mr Hamdani said there's a lot of debate on what kind of Pakistan Mr Jinnah wanted. One thing is clear: what kind of Pakistan he did not want. He did not want a Pakistan where the state decides who is Muslim and who isn't; he did not want a Pakistan where minority citizens are denied the right to become prime minister; he did not want a Pakistan where there's dictatorship. "These things vitiate the spirit of Jinnah," he remarked.

Secretary general of Jinnah Society Ameena Saiyid in her concluding remarks thanked the speakers for enriching the audience's insight and said that the event was also a tribute to the late Stanley Wolpert, a friend to Pakistan.

After the speeches, the book was formally launched.

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