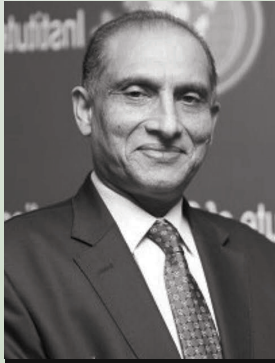


## Pakistan-India Relations: The Estranged Neighbours



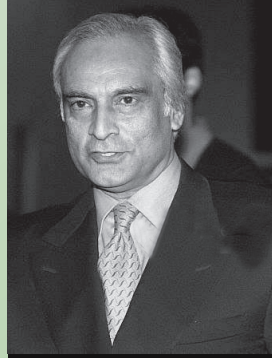
**Ambassador  
Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry**

Former Foreign Secretary -  
Chairman Sanober Institute



**Dr. Qamar Cheema**

Executive Director  
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**Ambassador  
Shahid Malik**

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**Dr. Mujeeb Afzal**

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**Mateen Haider**

(Diplomatic Correspondent)

### Summary:

- Strong and charismatic leaders are crucial for fostering positive India-Pakistan relations, generating popular consensus, and addressing historical grievances while prioritizing regional stability.
- Political complexities within Pakistan, including the interplay between elected leaders and unelected institutions, highlight the need for a collaborative approach aligning political and security interests.
- Creating an empowering environment for leaders, irrespective of backgrounds, to initiate bold steps towards dialogue and cooperation is key, involving building public support, fostering trust among institutions, and leveraging civil society and track II diplomacy.
- The challenge of finding suitable interlocutors in Pakistan necessitates strategic thinking, a commitment to regional stability, and exploring innovative solutions beyond traditional diplomatic channels.
- Multifaceted considerations in the discussion underscored the significance of charismatic political leadership in fostering positive engagement and the necessity of a national consensus in Pakistan to drive the peace process.
- A call to reevaluate the narrative on Kashmir beyond the fixation on restoring Article 370 was emphasized, recognizing the global geopolitical context favoring India and exploring innovative engagement strategies.

- Internal dynamics within India, such as economic debates and challenges of Hindu nationalism, were explored, emphasizing potential consequences for minorities in the bilateral relationship.
- Acknowledgment of limitations in global partners influencing India-Pakistan relations highlighted the importance of internal measures and regional strategies for conflict resolution.
- Key recommendations included starting with achievable goals like People-to-People contact and bilateral trade, addressing global dynamics and the changing geopolitical landscape.
- Emphasis on putting the house in order, focusing on economic stability, and holding timely elections to enhance Pakistan's regional influence and encourage constructive engagement with India concluded the discussion.

## Introduction:

The Sanober Institute hosted a compelling conversation titled "Pakistan-India Relations: The Estranged Neighbours" in its Neighbourhood Series. The esteemed panel, including Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Ambassador Shahid Malik, Professor Dr Mujeeb Afzal, Mateen Haider, and Dr Qamar Cheema, delved into the intricate dynamics of Pakistan-India relations, particularly in the aftermath of the Indian Supreme Court's landmark decision on Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. The discourse highlighted the crucial role of political leadership and emphasized the necessity of a national consensus in Pakistan to propel the peace process.

## Key Takeaways:

- **Charismatic Leadership and Consensus:**  
Charismatic leaders are essential for generating consensus and trust, navigating the complexities of domestic politics, historical grievances, and prioritizing regional stability over narrow political gains.
- **Complexities of Engaging with India:**  
Addressing historical grievances and navigating intricate domestic political landscapes is a challenge, emphasizing the need for a cohesive approach within Pakistan to align national and regional interests.
- **Dynamics Between Elected Leaders and Institutions:**  
Political instability and concerns about relevance in engaging with India pose challenges, underscoring the necessity for a collaborative approach within Pakistan where political and security institutions align their interests.
- **Empowering Leaders for Dialogue:**  
Creating an environment where leaders, irrespective of backgrounds, feel empowered to take bold steps towards dialogue and cooperation involves building public support, fostering trust among institutions, and addressing concerns on both sides.

- **Role of Civil Society and Track II Diplomacy:**

Leveraging civil society, business communities, and track II diplomacy is crucial for laying the groundwork for sustained dialogue and conflict resolution beyond traditional diplomatic channels.

## Recommendations:

- **Start with Achievable Goals:**

Initiating People-to-People contact and bilateral trade can gradually rebuild the relationship, starting with small, achievable steps.

- **Reevaluate the Narrative on Kashmir:**

Moving beyond the fixation on restoring Article 370 and reevaluating the narrative based on current ground realities is imperative for promoting dialogue.

- **Global Geopolitical Context:**

Acknowledging major powers' favoritism towards India in the global context requires nuanced strategies to navigate the changing geopolitical landscape.

- **Internal Dynamics Within India:**

Considering economic debates and challenges of Hindu nationalism is crucial to assess potential impacts on minorities and regional dynamics.

- **Limitations of Global Partners:**

Acknowledging constraints in global partners influencing India-Pakistan relations emphasizes the need for internal measures and regional strategies for conflict resolution.

- **Innovative Engagement Strategies:**

Exploring creative approaches encompassing diverse issues and promoting people-to-people contact is essential for developing new frameworks for sustained and constructive dialogue.

- **Upcoming Elections Impact:**

Recognizing potential impacts of upcoming elections in both countries and planning actions considering electoral dynamics is crucial for constructive bilateral ties.

- **Conducive Environment for Dialogue:**

Addressing concerns on both sides to foster an environment conducive to dialogue is necessary for laying the groundwork for normalization through comprehensive conflict resolution.

- **Grant Provincial Status to Territories:**

Granting provincial status to territories like Gilgit-Baltistan aligns with ground realities and strategic interests for a stable and integrated approach.

- **Put Pakistan's House in Order:**

Prioritizing economic stability and holding timely elections is crucial to enhance regional influence and encourage constructive engagement with India.

## Conclusion:

The Sanober Institute's insightful panel discussion, enriched by additional insights, offers invaluable perspectives on the intricate dynamics of Pakistan-India relations. Navigating these complexities requires charismatic leadership, consensus-building, and innovative strategies. The recommendations present a strategic path forward, underscoring achievable goals, narrative adjustments, and comprehensive conflict resolution. The report advocates for a forward-looking approach that prioritizes regional stability and fosters constructive engagement between India and Pakistan.