

Who benefits from Indo-Pak strife, ponders Pakistani scribe



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Guwahati: Come election season in [India](#) or Pakistan and politicians make hay with hate speech. Bashing the neighbor has always been the easier way out to seek some electoral lift, but political [leaders](#) need to be more responsible, considering the historically fraught relations between the two neighboring countries, commented Munir Ahmed, a senior journalist, news commentator and communication specialist of Pakistan. Addressing the member-journalists of Guwahati Press Club on 9 November 2018 through video conferencing from Islamabad, Ahmed maintained hard words against rabble-rousing elements in both Pakistani and Indian media as well. Bemoaning the rigid exclusion of each other's media by governments of the two South Asian nations, he advocated for media exchange programmes as part of a broader people-to-people contact.

Pointing out that elements of Indian entertainment and culture, including standard Bollywood fare, are quite popular in Pakistan, Ahmed posed a question, why we cannot allow each other's official newscasters Doordarshan and PTV to be aired in the respective territories, nonetheless subject to necessary restrictions? "The initiative would help bring about better understanding of mutual concerns and perspectives at the grassroots," said the outspoken journalist, who used to be a regular contributor to Daily Times and participant to various programs telecast by PTV and other national news channels.

Dwelling on the [state](#) of Pakistani media, Ahmed claimed that around [ten](#) English language dailies and several Urdu dailies and periodicals are thriving and they enjoy significant degree of independence.

However, alternative media is also booming with nearly half the 21 crore Pakistani population hooked to various social media platforms, stated Ahmed admitting that some social media users do get carried away, often making extreme and anti-national comments. He admitted that there is need to regulate the social media.

It may noted that Ahmed inspired the authority to adopt Pakistan's first ever [National Conservation](#) Strategy, [National](#) Housing Policy, [National Environment](#) Protection Act, [National](#) Sustainable [Development](#) Strategy etc. He is the founder of [Development](#) Communications Network and also Pakistan Mountain [Festival](#). Fluent in Urdu and English, Ahmed penned many short stories as well.

Stressing the importance of resolving the long-standing Kashmir dispute for overall improvement in bilateral relations, Ahmed however pinned the blame for terror activities on fringe elements. Think of the improvements the two countries can make in the lives of common people, if only huge expenditure is not necessitated in mutual conflict, he asserted.

“We should all ask ourselves as to which third party has been benefiting with the two neighbors remaining always on loggerheads?” questioned Ahmed adding that a beginning can be made by regional associations like SAARC playing a pro-active role to bind member-countries together at one [level](#), as well as international groups like Lions Club and Rotary Club working to improve popular contact at the ground.

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Assam Times Staff. editor@assamtimes.org

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