



**SUBJECT ASSOCIATION OF
CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN STUDIES
JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA**

AL-NAHDA

THE WEST ASIAN HERALD

PEACE FOR PROFIT? THE U.S. HAND IN THE RWANDA-DRC MINERAL TRUCE

By Abu Horairah (M.A, Sem- II)

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- *Diplomacy in Action*
- *West Asia roundup*
- *Historical Figure*
- *Guest Column*

Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has signed a historic peace agreement in Washington on June 27, 2025, which was possible only through diplomatic channels. Mediated by the U.S., the peace agreement between Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda is aimed at ending years of proxy wars and rebel conflict between two nations. However, the agreement can prove to be a good strategic move for U.S. to gain access to DRC rare mineral resources for energy security and in exchange for peace and security.

DRC has an approximate worth of \$24 trillion of minerals like cobalt, lithium, coltan, copper, and gold Reserves for defense industries and global tech giants yet despite its natural wealth, Congo has never use of these resources because decades of instability, poor infrastructure and technological resources. As part of the peace agreement, Washington has been committed to support a regional economic integration plan promising investment, logistical aid and security coordination. In return, DRC has agreed to open its mining sector to more American companies under the guise of partnership and development, with Rwanda stepping back from its alleged support for rebel groups in the east, mining corridors will reopen under American supervision. For United States, this deal is more about resource security and less for peace in this region. As China dominating in rare-earth market Washington has been looking for diversifying its source and gain control over supply chains especially in Africa. Focus on regional economic integration, the objective of agreement includes the establishment of peace and stability in the region. However, there is uncertainty and skepticism regarding the implementation as the region is troubled with regional instability and poor governance structures in place which can be major hurdles in attracting investments from American mining companies. Moreover, the deal in fact, will potentially serve American interests in the region. Experts cite that the main intention of the deal is to gain foreign profits over domestic interests.

In the absence of proper laws, U.S. companies would take control over Congo's minerals while local citizens continue to live in poverty. U.S. is investing in peace only to extract profit, said a regional observer. Congo will get roads. America will get lithium. While for some, the deal can be a gateway to attract broader investments, creation of jobs and stabilise eastern Congo if laws are implemented with transparency. The critics, however, warn that unless civil society, local communities and anti-corruption bodies are involved DRC may once again become rich in resources but will remain poor in outcomes. The accusation of M23 rebel group for its absence from the peace talks and its rejection of parts of the agreement brings the situation on verge of instability and confusion. If violence resumes, mining operations will stall again and American investors may retreat leaving Congo in chaos once more exploited and dumped.

Rwanda - DRC peace deal is being hailed as a diplomatic success but it is also a business strategy. For the US, minerals are the prize in exchange for peace. For Congo, the deal is a gambling for peace in exchange for resource access. Whether it results in transformation or another chapter of extraction depends on what comes next and who really benefits when the drills begin.

STATUS OF INDIAN RUPEE AS OFFICIAL CURRENCY ACROSS THE GULF REGION

By Md. Arif (M.A, Sem- II)

A lesser known fact to be known, the Indian currency Rupee was widely used in several parts of Middle East, especially in the Gulf region for long time. During the 1950s and 1960s, the official currency of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Trucial States (now UAE) and Oman were not American dollar or United Kingdom's pounds but was Indian Rupee.

A one rupee note could be carried to Dubai from Delhi without any exchange and change in its value. During that time, India became the central banker for the Arabian Peninsula. One of the primary reason for Indian Rupee playing a crucial role in Gulf economy was the absence of national currencies for the Gulf states during British colonial rule. Gulf nations were British protectorates and used British pounds for exchanges. The Indian rupee became the default money backed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and pegged to the British pound. Gulf states bought Indian rupees by giving gold-backed pound sterling to RBI. Then RBI printed notes and shipped them to Gulf banks. These rupees were legal tender in both Gulf and India allowing circulation of rupees across Gulf and India.

The Gulf-India relations built on trust and integrity as Gulf relied and trusted RBI were unintentionally giving rise to gold smuggling as the traders found a loophole in the system. They used the trick to buy gold in Dubai or Kuwait using Indian rupees and smuggle gold into India. By this, they would sell the gold in India at a 40-50% higher price (due to India's gold import ban) and sent the same rupees back to Gulf. Soon, it became a billion-rupee underground industry.

In a single year, 1957 India lost 92 Cr in foreign exchange due to Gulf rupee redemption. The gold worth of 69 crores was smuggled back. RBI couldn't track currency flow resulting in hoarding of private gold. India was unknowingly bankrolling illegal trade. A genius solution by RBI to stop the currency leak, Gulf Rupee (1959-1970) was born with a special "Z" series number but identical to Indian rupees. They looked like Indian notes, but could not be used in India and meant to be used only in the Gulf.

In 1966, India devalued the rupee by 36.5% because of mounting deficits and pressure from IMF. The rising import costs was leading to value reduction in Gulf currency. India's domestic crisis affected Gulf economy and led panic among Gulf rulers. Imagine holding you have 1 crore Rupees now worth 63 lakh Rupees overnight. The decades of trust was broken, triggering the great Gulf currency exit.

Then the Gulf states had started launching their own currency; Kuwait - Dinar (1961); Bahrain - Dinar (1965); Qatar and Dubai - Riyal (1966); Oman and Saudi Arabia - Riyal (1970). Each pegged their new currency above the rupee, to avoid devaluation impact leading to the death of Gulf rupee. Thus a golden chapter in India's financial history came to an end.



By Moin Aftab (M.A, Sem-II)

In the aftermath of the Assad regime, Syrian women's rights activists have become central to the nation's effort for societal reconstruction and political inclusion. Feminist movements, hard-won and deeply rooted in the lived reality of decades of hardship, are now the leading force in the pursuit of a fairer, more representative Syria. Noor Ahmad from the Syrian Women's Political Movement has described this pivotal moment: "We work inside Syria and abroad, holding workshops and raising our voices for women's issues... This is not just about activism. It's about creating real change and making sure women have a seat at the table." These words capture a movement built not on external rescue but on self-determination and solidarity. Female leaders and activists press for protection, reintegration support, the preservation of evidence for war crimes, and the search for the missing. At the same time, they call for sustained international funding to rebuild civil society and support the millions displaced by years of conflict.

Lina Khatib emphasizes that the post-Assad era marks an unprecedented turning point in Syria's history, igniting hope for freedom and equality, but she cautions that this optimism collides with persistent patriarchal norms, entrenched legal obstacles, and insecurity that narrows the limited opportunities opening up for women. Historically, women's participation in Syrian governance was largely symbolic, with appointments engineered to project inclusivity without granting actual power. Khatib underscores this dynamic: "Under both Assads... women's roles in governance were largely symbolic. The government appointed women to positions in a bid to project an image of inclusivity, but real political influence remained out of reach."

The Syrian revolution changed this status quo. Women emerged as central figures in the protests and resistance, organizing, delivering aid, and documenting abuses at enormous personal risk. As the revolution's initial momentum faded, many found themselves once again marginalized in decision-making. Researchers for The Conversation remind us, "Women played an essential role in the Syrian revolution. They organised protests and advocated for rights (often at great personal risk). They endured sacrifices such as imprisonment, torture, disappearance and displacement... But women, who were marginalised politically and economically under Assad, continue to be systematically excluded from decision-making in the new government." The danger is that Syria might squander its rare opportunity for inclusiveness and repeat the old patterns of exclusion.

Nonetheless, the recent transitional government has appointed women to significant posts. After Aisha al-Dibs was named head of the Women's Affairs Office, attracting attention for her pledge to "encourage women from all the Syrian provinces and ethnicities to participate in an upcoming national conference," the focus shifted to other prominent figures joining the transitional leadership. One of the most notable is Hind Kabawat, appointed Minister of Social Affairs and Labor. As the only woman and the sole Christian in a 23-member transitional cabinet, Kabawat immediately recognized the representational imbalance. "I tried to convince them that more female ministers were needed, but it was complicated, with the imperative to ensure ethnic and religious diversity within the government. However, there is no excuse for having only one female minister. I was promised that more women would be appointed to high positions," Kabawat noted, emphasizing the government's obligation to move beyond symbolic representation. Kabawat, long known for her interfaith and conflict resolution work and her vocal opposition to the Assad regime, dismissed accusations that she was a "diversity token." She insists, "My ministry is one of the most important in the post-conflict period, given the number of orphans, displaced people and vulnerable people in the country." Kabawat's vision is to secure not just women's representation for appearance's sake but to ensure their practical influence in building the nation's future.

In another groundbreaking appointment, Maysaa Sabreen made history as the first woman to serve as the country's Central Bank governor. Sabreen, a highly qualified economist who previously held the post of first deputy governor, stepped into leadership during one of Syria's most challenging periods. Her tenure came as Syria faced the aftershocks of more than a decade

of war, rampant inflation, and economic instability. A bank official described the change: "We received an internal circular... assigning Dr Maysa Sabreen to run the Central Bank of Syria in a caretaker capacity." Sabreen's appointment is not only symbolic; her career brings substantial expertise in banking and economic policy at a time when the country desperately needs to rebuild trust in the financial system and restore the value of the domestic currency. Her immediate responsibilities include stabilizing the Syrian pound and steering the nation through formidable financial hurdles, all while enhancing the role of women in high-level decision-making.

While these appointments represent historic progress, they reflect only the beginning of the journey. Syrian women's movements, especially in the Kurdish-majority regions, continue to pilot more egalitarian models with co-leadership structures and legal reforms. Yet the reach of their influence is still limited by the fractured landscape left in the wake of war. The enduring challenge remains whether Syria's evolving political structure will institutionalize gender equality and grant women a permanent, influential role, moving beyond mere symbolism to a substantive, decisive presence as the nation rebuilds. Hind Kabawat's and Maysaa Sabreen's breakthroughs are milestones, replenishing hope and sending a clear message that meaningful female participation is both possible and indispensable in the quest for lasting peace and justice.

IN THE RUBBLE OF GAZA: WHAT REMAINS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW?

By Sadiya Inam (M.A, Sem- II)

There are times when, as author Anatole France says, "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges," but it doesn't really do justice. One of these times is Gaza, when the systems that are supposed to uphold order and humanity are quiet. Here, legal systems crumble under the weight of atrocity, and urgent moral responsibilities cry out to be heard.

Hospitals have become turned into ruins, schools changed into battlegrounds, and the lives of journalists and aid workers lost amid chaos. Children, who used to be symbols of hope, are now buried under rubble, and whole families can disappear in an instant. This tragedy is not hidden; it is streamed and recorded in real time on TVs all around the world. But the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and the International Court of Justice, which are supposed to stop this kind of suffering, are slow to act. In the midst of destruction, we must enquire, as legal expert Martti Koskeniemi posits, "What happens to international law when its promises are not matched by its practice?"

Even the International Court of Justice said in January 2024 that there was "a plausible risk of genocide" in Gaza. These words are "cold, legal, and measured," but as international lawyer Philippe Sands says, "they can be more powerful than the roar of bombs." But even though this was known, violence continued, ceasefires fell apart, and the misery grew. As Louis Henkin famously stated, "Almost all nations observe almost all principles of international law and almost all of their obligations almost all of the time. But not all the time". The Geneva Conventions and the Genocide Convention, crafted from the ashes of past horrors, now see their authority buried under the rubble they were meant to prevent.

When the law is left without enforcement, fairness, or true commitment, it becomes, in the words of Justice Robert H. Jackson at Nuremberg, "an empty shell, a tool for political expediency rather than justice." The hypocrisy is glaring, the same global powers that rush to defend Ukraine's sovereignty often obstruct or dilute efforts to safeguard Palestinian lives. Leaders who proclaim their dedication to human rights and progressive values frequently refuse to recognize the violence in Gaza for what it is, "systematic, targeted, and brutal," as described by Amnesty International.



Yet, to claim that international law has failed entirely would be to surrender to despair. As Rebecca Hamilton observes, "Law does not stay within the halls of power. When institutions falter, individuals and communities rise to claim its promise". Today, a groundswell of legal activism is emerging from below, passionate lawyers, tireless advocates, academics, students, and survivors are not merely witnesses- they are agents of change. They document violations, build cases before national and regional courts, and use digital tools to preserve evidence, reviving the Genocide Convention as a "living document of resistance" fit for contemporary struggles.

This new legal consciousness does not await institutional validation. It forms networks, identifies perpetrators, and refuses to let memory fade. In this grassroots movement, the old idea that international law exists only for states and diplomats is challenged. Instead, the law is reclaimed, compelled, as former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein insists, "to answer to those who suffer when it fails".

HISTORICAL FIGURE

ابن سینا: علمی ورثے کا روشن حوالہ

By Mohammad Zafar Iqbal (M.A, Sem- II)

جب ہم تاریخ کا مطالعہ کرتے ہیں تو اپنے دور کے عظیم مفکرین میں ابو علی حسین بن عبداللہ ابن سینا (980-1037 عیسوی) کا مقام نہایت ہی بلند ہے مغرب میں وہ (Avicenna) کے نام سے جانے جاتے ہیں اور مشرق میں انہیں شیخ الرئیس کے لقب سے یاد کیا جاتا ہے۔ ایک علمی گھرانے سے ان کا تعلق تھا جو بخارا، موجودہ ازبکستان میں بستا تھا۔ تاریخ بتاتی ہے کہ ابن سینا نے صرف 10 برس کی عمر میں قرآن حفظ کیا اور محض 16 سال کی عمر میں طب میں اپنا لوہا ایسے منوایا کہ مشہور زمانہ حکیم بن گئے۔

ابن سینا صرف مسلمانوں کے لیے ہی نہیں بلکہ ان کے ہنر کے چرچے یورپ تک ہوتے رہے۔ ابن سینا کی مشہور کتاب القانون فی الطب (The Canon of Medicine) صدیوں تک نہ صرف اسلامی دنیا میں بلکہ یورپ کی کئی طبی جامعات میں بھی طب کی بنیاد سمجھی جاتی رہی۔ اس کتاب میں انہوں نے بیماریوں کی اقسام ادویات کی خصوصیات اور علاج کے اصولوں کو انتہائی منظم انداز میں پیش کیا۔ سب سے اہم بات یہ ہے کہ ابن سینا نے تجربے پر مبنی مشاہدہ اور ادویات کی جانچ جیسے اصولوں کو متعارف کرایا جو اس وقت کے لحاظ سے ایک انقلابی سوچ تھی۔ ان کی طبی بصیرت آج بھی کئی جدید سائنسی طریقوں سے ہم آہنگ دکھائی دیتی ہے۔ فلسفے میں انہوں نے ارسطو کے خیالات کو اسلامی سوچ کے مطابق ڈھال کر ایک نئی فکری نظام کی تشکیل دی۔ ان کی مشہور زمانہ کتاب "کتاب الشفاء" میں منطق، سائنس، ریاضی، نفسیات مابعد اطباعات ایسے سوالات جو دنیا سے ماورا ہوں، پر تفصیل سے بات کی گئی ہے۔ ان کا تجربہ فلوئنگ مین اس بات پر زور دیتا ہے کہ انسان کو اپنے وجود کا شعور پیدائشی طور پر ہوتا ہے چاہے وہ کسی بھی بیرونی چیز سے واقف نہ ہو ابن سینا کا یہ خیال آج کی نفسیات کے کئی نظریات سے میل کھاتا ہے۔ ان کا یہ ماننا تھا کہ فلسفہ، سائنس اور مذہب کو ایک دوسرے سے ہرگز جدا نہیں کیا جا سکتا بلکہ انہیں الگ نہیں ہم آہنگ ہونا چاہئے۔ ان کے ان خیالات نے نہ صرف اسلامی دنیا کو متاثر کیا بلکہ یورپی مفکرین جیسے "توماس اکیویناس" پر بھی گہرا اثر ڈالا ہے۔



دلچسپ حقیقت: جامعہ ملیہ اسلامیہ اور ابن سینا بلاک

جامعہ ملیہ اسلامیہ میں موجود ایک تاریخی عمارت جو مرکزی کتب خانہ تھی، اس کو آج بھی ابن سینا بلاک کہا جاتا ہے۔ یہ عمارت صرف اینٹوں کا مجموعہ نہیں بلکہ علم و جستجو کی اس روایت کا امین ہے جسے ابن سینا نے کئی صدیوں قبل زندہ کیا۔

TRANSFORMING SAUDI ARABIA: THE IMPACT OF VISION 2030 ON FINTECH, TECHNOLOGICAL INCUBATION, AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Moomin Khan

Queen's Mary University, London

M.Sc. Management

Saudi Arabia is going through a dynamic transformation right now, and these changes are quickly altering the country's future through improvements in fintech, renewable energy, and technological incubation. The Vision 2030 initiative is the main reason for these changes, which are all about new ideas and economic diversity. J.P. Morgan pointed out, "The difference is the level of coordination and cooperation between the main local players in Saudi Arabia." Because of this cooperative environment, the country has been able to build its fintech sector from just 10 companies in 2018 to more than 200 by 2023. Arthur D. Little says that this means "a 20-fold increase in the number of fintechs operating in the kingdom" in five years, thanks to "over SAR 4 billion (~US\$1 billion) invested in fintech." The combination of government-backed programs like Fintech Saudi and a liberal regulatory sandbox has sped up digital payments, alternative financing, and investment platforms. "More than 75% of transactions are now digital."

At the same time, the Kingdom's investment in renewable energy shows that it wants to be the leader in the region's sustainability agenda. InvestGlass says that Saudi Arabia wants to get 50% of its energy from renewable sources by 2030. This is possible with big solar and wind projects like the Al Shuaibah and Al Hanakiyeh plants. Arthur D. Little shows how big this project is: "By 2030, the goal is to have 130 GW of clean energy (solar and wind)." The NEOM Green Hydrogen project and a \$50 billion national budget for developing renewable energy make these efforts more stronger. "Saudi Arabia is making big steps to cut down on its use of fossil fuels and put money into renewable energy and sustainability."

The advent of technological incubators is a key part of this change. They have made it easier for new ideas to grow. InvestGlass says, "Saudi Arabia's rapidly changing entrepreneurial ecosystem has seen a rise in the number of incubators and accelerators, which are very important for helping startups grow." There are presently more than 360 business incubator and accelerator licenses in the country. The Badir, TAQADAM, and Fintech Saudi Accelerator programs all offer government assistance, money, and coaching. The Taqatech Accelerator is a good example of this. It connects companies with resources and experts to "drive innovation in the sector, promote economic growth, enhance environmental sustainability, and create job opportunities."

As these efforts come together, Saudi Arabia is not only helping a new generation of investors and entrepreneurs, but it is also changing its status as a leader in digital banking and clean technology in the region. Vision 2030 is becoming a reality because to the combination of ambitious planning, coordinated investment, and ongoing support for startups. This will "empower consumers and businesses with financial tools and services that are accessible, efficient, and secure."





Chief Editor– Prof. H A Nazmi (Director & President of Subject Association)

Editorial Advisor– Prof. Sebastian N. (Course Advisor)

General Editors– Warisha Wasi (Vice President), Ayan Akhtar (General Secretary),

Syed Shahabuddin Andrabi and Md. Arif

Editorial Assistance– Zafar Madni, Sadiya Patel, Muhammad Safwan

Graphics Team – Shafaque and Abul Ahla

For Feedback E-Mail us at - subjectassociationcwas@gmail.com