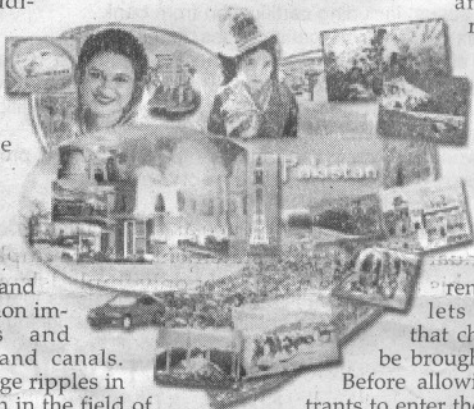


Palc Econom
19-2-05

Nations

Our growth targets are set as high as 8 percent during the next three years. Our economy appears buoyant and fast growing. Foreign investors are exploring Pakistan in search of new possibilities in manufacturing and production and foreign investment seems to be pouring in rather rapidly as compared to the last decade. Interest rates have gone down, businesses look better, investment in industry is increasing, real estate is booming. Music is flourishing. Our audiences have accessibility to the best cable TV. This era also marks the commencement of mega projects like Gwadar, infrastructure and communication improvements and new dams and canals. There are huge ripples in the field of education, banking, health and

Before allowing new entrants to enter the field, exist-



education, banking, health and arts. Expo Pakistan 2005 has drawn huge crowds and strong response from global investment and business community. What does all this signify?

These are signs of recovery.

What do these leading macro economic indicators convey to the common man? They signify hope, prosperity, employment opportunities, more personal disposable income, satisfaction and economic stability. So for once let's stop putting ourselves down. Let's stop finding faults with our government and what could have been. Let's take advantage of this situation. Let's join our hands together and make Pakistan a shining star on the world map. If we do not capitalise on this situation there may never be another.

How can we do it?

Forces that need to be taken into consideration and manipulated are economic, social, demographic, political, religious in nature. It is almost impossible to consider these factors separately because they closely overlap each other. There are actually no demarking boundaries where these forces are concerned in practical life and their impact is often jointly felt.

First and foremost, let's start loving Pakistan. Let's forget our individual interests and selfish desires and do some good for our motherland. If we plunder and destroy our assets we don't need enemies to attack us. We are our worst enemy. Has anyone ever heard citizens of a country blowing away its strategic installations, kidnapping foreigners, blasting phone and power systems, and killing in the name of religious sectarianism?

This may be a done thing in nations which are still in the realms of darkness, ignorance and illiteracy, otherwise it is condemned by all. We need to rise above all individual differences. These incidents are detrimental to our image as a nation and strongly shake the confidence of foreign investors and organisations that are planning to make our country their regional producer or supplier.

Demographically, Pakistan is one of the most thickly populated countries of the world. Our manpower is our largest and ever-growing resource. In the developed nations, shortage of manpower makes it a very expensive resource. Let's harness our manpower, that is, both men and women, and train them. We need to provide our workers with more marketable skills that are needed by the manufacturing sector. Let's take hold of the bull of opportunity by the horns and turn the situation of overpopulation to our advantage and become one of the universal leaders in the development and provision of skilled labour.

We need to be more competitive. With the World Trade Organisation (WTO) regime becoming supreme,

existing universities, in both public and private sector, need to be strengthened. Research departments should be set up with close cooperation of the corporate sector for successful education.

Technical and vocational training will lead to manpower that will become the backbone of the country. More vocational training institutions need to be set up on the most modern and advanced lines. Our crop is smart and intelligent but needs the right support and guidance to lead the world. Strong emphasis on population planning will lead to fewer mouths to feed. The quality of life will get better. This will lead to lower levels of deprivation. More haves and fewer have-nots may put us in a better place internationally where corruption is concerned.

Small and medium size enterprise sector requires more attention. We need more entrepreneurs, fearless, willing to take risks and conquer the obstacles. We need to train our youth in such a way that they get rid of the fear of failure. Failure and success both go hand in hand and are necessary for growth. With guidance, focus and channelised effort the chance of failure is minimised. Reckless risks are stupid but calculated risks give positive results.

Healthy minds belong to healthy bodies. Better health facilities that are accessible to all need to be provided. Let's make 100 percent of our population contribute to our economic growth. This can be accomplished if everyone is healthy and happy.

For prosperity and development the rule of law should firmly be in place. Cutting corners in quality must be strongly avoided. Our police reforms will provide the law enforcing agencies with the latest training, equipment, facilities and the citizens with more security of life and property.

We need to capitalise on the current opportunities as soon as possible. We need to open up our minds and tread in a dignified way on the path of "enlightened moderation". Abrogate our religious, sectarian, cultural and regional differences. We should start evaluating people on their achievement, capability and merit. We need to shed the disastrous cloaks of fundamentalism, religious pompousness and cultural superiority. Let's practice humility and make every decision in the best interest of Pakistan. We have a business friendly environment that needs to be supplemented with more political stability and a stronger enforcement of law and order.

Now nothing can stop us from growing except ourselves. Let's change our mindset. Let's stop looking back at history and look at future. History has given us the foundations. Let's join hands and build Pakistan into a strong skyscraper that we proudly own and the world cannot ignore.