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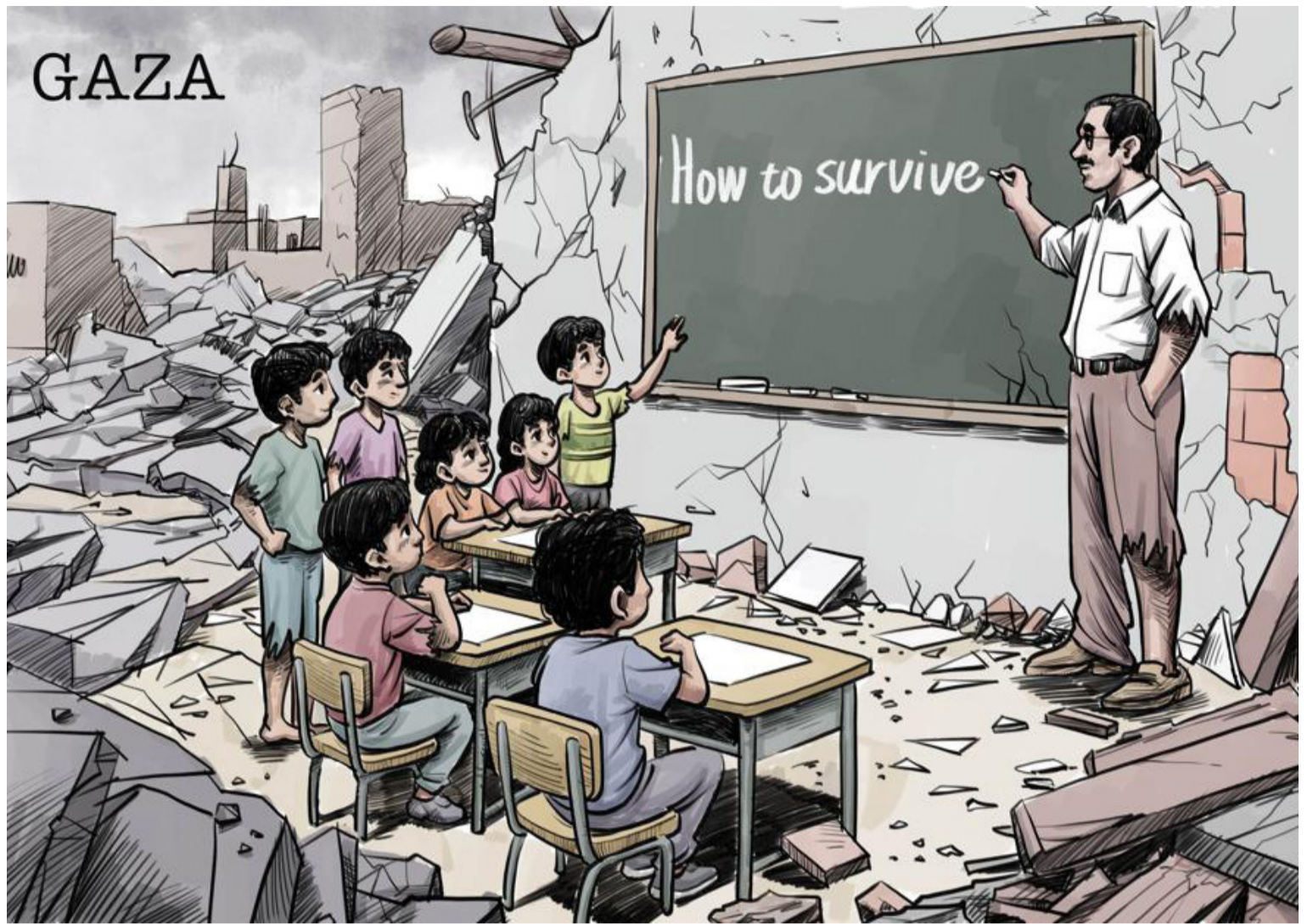
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Pragmatism sees vision turning to reality

A defining trait of Sino-African cooperation is its result-oriented with the aim of improving African people's well-being and enhancing African countries' endogenous development capabilities.

That is clearly manifested in the convening of the Ministerial Meeting of Coordinators on the Implementation of the Follow-up Actions of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Changsha, Hunan province, from Tuesday to Thursday — attended by representatives of the 54 African members of the FOCAC — as well as the Fourth China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo from Thursday to Sunday in the same city.

At the FOCAC summit held in Beijing in September, President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech in which he put forward six proposals and 10 partnership initiatives for jointly advancing modernization and building an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

Following the summit, the two sides have been working closely together to actively implement these proposals and initiatives and they have made important progress and achieved many early harvests.

The ongoing Changsha meeting is conducive to enhancing the coordination between China and African countries with a focus on further implementing the six proposals and 10 partnership initiatives put forward by President Xi, so that people in China and Africa will benefit more from the outcomes of the 2024 FOCAC summit. Implementing the proposals and initiatives, which cover a wide range of fields from trade, health and agriculture to industry chains, connectivity, green development and common security, entails timely communication, efficient coordination and close cooperation of government departments at different levels, enterprises, social organizations, institutions and media organizations. The Changsha meeting serves to provide such a platform for these stakeholders from both sides to energize their endeavors in different fields to transform the proposals and initiatives into blueprints, projects, actions and tangible benefits.

As the world has entered a new period of turbulence and change in recent years, relevant parties should strengthen their efforts to appropriately manage all types of risks and challenges and effectively address the impact of geopolitical conflicts while advancing high-quality Sino-African cooperation.

It is therefore necessary for the two sides to properly handle the relationship between strengthening participating countries' sense of fulfillment and also ensuring the benefits for China by taking concrete measures to safeguard China's overseas interests, as President Xi urged at a symposium on the development of the Belt and Road Initiative in Beijing in December.

No winner to declare in Trump-Musk feud

The bitter feud that broke out this past week between Elon Musk and President Donald Trump is more than bravado gone bad. It highlighted the ugly, juvenile tendencies of both as they aired a personal grudge on a global scale.

As bizarre and, admittedly, entertaining in a sort of WWE way, it proved, there were no winners to declare. Not Musk, not Trump, not their supporters, investors nor perhaps even bystanders.

Ego can bring down the powerful — as Shakespeare observed long ago with Macbeth, King Lear and Othello. Achieving common goals and maintaining stability requires unity and collaboration. But that was quickly lost as they traded punches on social media.

For Musk, it only further erodes his current and future customer base for everything from Tesla cars to The Boring Company tunnel contracts to SpaceX rockets and satellites. It also suggests that maybe he isn't cut out for leadership no matter how many billions of dollars he still has. Lost trust is difficult to recapture.

For Trump, the world sees again that if you upset him enough, you can get under his skin. Get close to him, play to his ego and you can win him over without any authenticity. Neither quality is ideal for a global leader at a time when America needs to reassert itself.

Oh, it was quite the bromance for a time. Remember when in the aftermath of the assassination attempt on then-presidential candidate Trump, Musk tweeted unequivocally, "I fully endorse Trump." What followed was a prolonged political alliance that saw Musk sporting MAGA hats of nearly every variety, standing beside Trump at rallies across the country, addressing tens of thousands of Republicans at each stop, helping to raise millions for Trump and the GOP, and frequently, if awkwardly, appearing in the background of Oval Office meetings. Now, we suspect, Musk (and his son) won't be invited back to the Oval Office for some time.

Some of the more prescient among us saw this coming. Cracks were already apparent as Trump's "big, beautiful bill" was vetted. Claims that it would both jumpstart the economy and reduce the deficit proved too difficult a pill for Musk to swallow.

"Shame on those who voted for (the bill)," Musk now famously observed. Trump and many of his supporters alleged Musk only took issue with the bill because of the loss of electric vehicle subsidies. Musk, who spent hundreds of millions of dollars to get Trump reelected, then reminded the president of his game-changing political contributions. Oh, and he used the word "ingratitude."

Let's speed up efforts against Child Labor

By Ms. ISMAT MUSTAFA KHAN

The exploitative employment of children in industry or business-based activities has not been decreasing remarkably for the last two decades.

This forced work where children miss their potential abilities to attend regular school can be hazardous in a number of ways. In order to highlight the issues related to child labor, 12th June, 2025 is being marked as World Day Against Child Labor with the theme 'Progress is clear, but there's more to do; let's speed up efforts'.

Children's exploitation is prohibited by law all across the world.

Though, children under the age of 14 who work

child labor. However, they equally need and deserve security provision by legislation from any mental, physi-

cal, social and economic harm.

The total number of child laborers remains high and the issue needs to be addressed. African and Asian societies still face econom-

ically size is usually large and children have to earn for family support is curricula review in school education. If education-based activities can be transformed with a touch of functional skills' learning, children would definitely be able to earn better future livelihood in a truly positive spirit of work.

Young students from Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, Kallar Syedan projected their ideas on paper to draw the attention of people around towards child labor.

—The author also serves as the Principal of OPF Public School, Kallar Syedan

Children's exploitation is prohibited by law all across the world. Though, children under the age of 14 who work as artists, fulfill necessary family duties or earn under some specifically inevitable circumstances are exempted from the label of child labor. However, they equally need and deserve security provision by legislation from any mental, physical, social and economic harm.

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cal, social and economic harm.

Over the years, there has been decline in global child labor practices but

ic pressures and the graphs of child labor stay high here. One suggestion for such poor and developing countries where the fam-

In India, war came dressed in feminist camouflage

FROM AMRITA DATTA AND ARANI BASU

When two female officers of the Indian armed forces — one Hindu, one Muslim — took centre stage to announce Operation Sindoor, the government celebrated it as a landmark moment for gender inclusion. The image of uniformed women addressing the media from the front lines, avenging the deaths of 26 civilians, all men, and symbolically restoring the sindoor (vermillion) of widowhood, was widely praised as feminist iconography in service of the nation.

The moment echoed a historical parallel: during the 1971 Indo-Pak War, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was famously likened to the Hindu warrior Goddess Durga, a symbol of feminine power and nationalist resolve, in recognition of her decisive role in the creation of Bangladesh. That invocation of Durga underscored how Indian political power is often framed through a gendered and mythologised lens, blending statecraft with religious symbolism.

But can women leading war be inherently feminist? Nation-building, as feminist scholars have long warned, is not a gender-neutral project. It reconfigures women into roles that serve its ends: sacrificial mothers, grieving widows, or militant daughters of the nation. Scholars like Nira Yuval-Davis argue that women are positioned as symbolic bearers of the nation's honour and cultural authenticity but rarely as its political agents. In the Indian context, scholars like Samita Sen and Maitrayee Chaud-

huri remind us that women's public roles have historically been framed not in terms of autonomy, but duty to patriarchal structures. Therefore, the mere presence of women in public or political spheres does not automatically equate to gender justice. Representation must also be interrogated for its objectifying function.

Today's military feminism, in which women gain visibility in war zones, follows this same path: celebrating women's ability to "be like men" while leaving untouched the masculine and patriarchal foundations of militarism itself. This can be observed in Operation Sindoor, which projects the spectacle of two women in uniform as feminist optics, while the script they perform remains deeply patriarchal, demanding women prove

mines India's secular fabric. Its paramilitary structure and emphasis on discipline and nationalism reveal its aim of deepening the hierarchical and patriarchal structure of Indian society. The women's auxiliaries of the RSS — the Rashtra Sevika Samiti and Durga Vahini — reflect and reinforce this patriarchal vision. These groups have long trained women in martial arts and ideological devotion not for feminist liberation, but to protect the Hindu rashtra.

The aesthetics of Operation Sindoor — its saffron undertones, warrior femininity, and choreographed resolve — mirror this legacy. As Bina D'Costa's work on gender and war in South Asia underscores, women's bodies often become vehicles of nationalist redemption.

their worth through masculine-coded nationalism.

Such feminist optics align neatly with the ideological framework of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Founded in 1925, the RSS is a Hindu nationalist organisation that serves as the ideological parent of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). It envisions India as a Hindu rashtra (nation), advocating cultural nationalism rooted in Hindu traditions and values. Scholars like Christophe Jaffrelot argue that the RSS fosters majoritarianism and under-

mines India's secular fabric. Its paramilitary structure and emphasis on discipline and nationalism reveal its aim of deepening the hierarchical and patriarchal structure of Indian society.

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woman. It also invokes Goddess Durga. In Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation, historian Tanika Sarkar explores how nationalist discourse fuses the sanctity of the wife with that of the motherland. The very name Operation Sindoor weaponises this metaphor: it promises to avenge broken marital bonds through military strikes on Pakistan, thereby "restoring" the honour of Hindu widows. Yet this operation also constructs a tableau of women rendered widowed — stripped of their sindoor — whose grief is appropriated as nationalist fuel.

As feminist historian Urvashi Butalia reminds us, women's bodies and symbols become "testimonies of war." In this context, sindoor represents not what widows possess, but what they have lost: honour, status, and social security.

In the imagined redemptive arc of the nation, sindoor is not merely restored — it becomes a badge of nationalist virtue. The two women officers are cast not as autonomous agents, but as foot soldiers of a mythical motherland — extensions of the same patriarchal script that has long confined Indian women to domestic altars.

What is celebrated here is not women's liberation, but their assimilation into a militant masculine narrative. Militarised femininity is constructed to legitimise state violence, not resist it. It

is crucial to debunk symbols and interrogate the hierarchies they represent.

What exactly is being applauded when female officers lead a war? Is it the war itself, or the fact that women are participating in it, that is considered "feminist"? The gender metaphor in this spectacle casts women into patriarchal frameworks where they must emulate men to legitimise their agency. By celebrating these officers, the state co-opts women's leadership to validate militarism while leaving intact the structures that perpetuate gendered violence.

Feminist agency demands that women define the terms of their engagement. Here, those terms are dictated by the patriarchal nationalism of the RSS ideology. The two officers did not challenge gender norms; they stepped into a pre-written script that equates womanhood with wifely duty to the nation. T

their exalted martial roles serve to naturalise militarism, even as they are packaged as gender progress. The inclusion of a Muslim officer is not incidental. In the ideological universe of Durga Vahini, non-Hindu women can be co-opted, so long as they defend the Hindu "family".

This token inclusion supports an illusion of pluralism, while systemic marginalisation of Muslim citizens continues unabated. —FP

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EDITORIAL