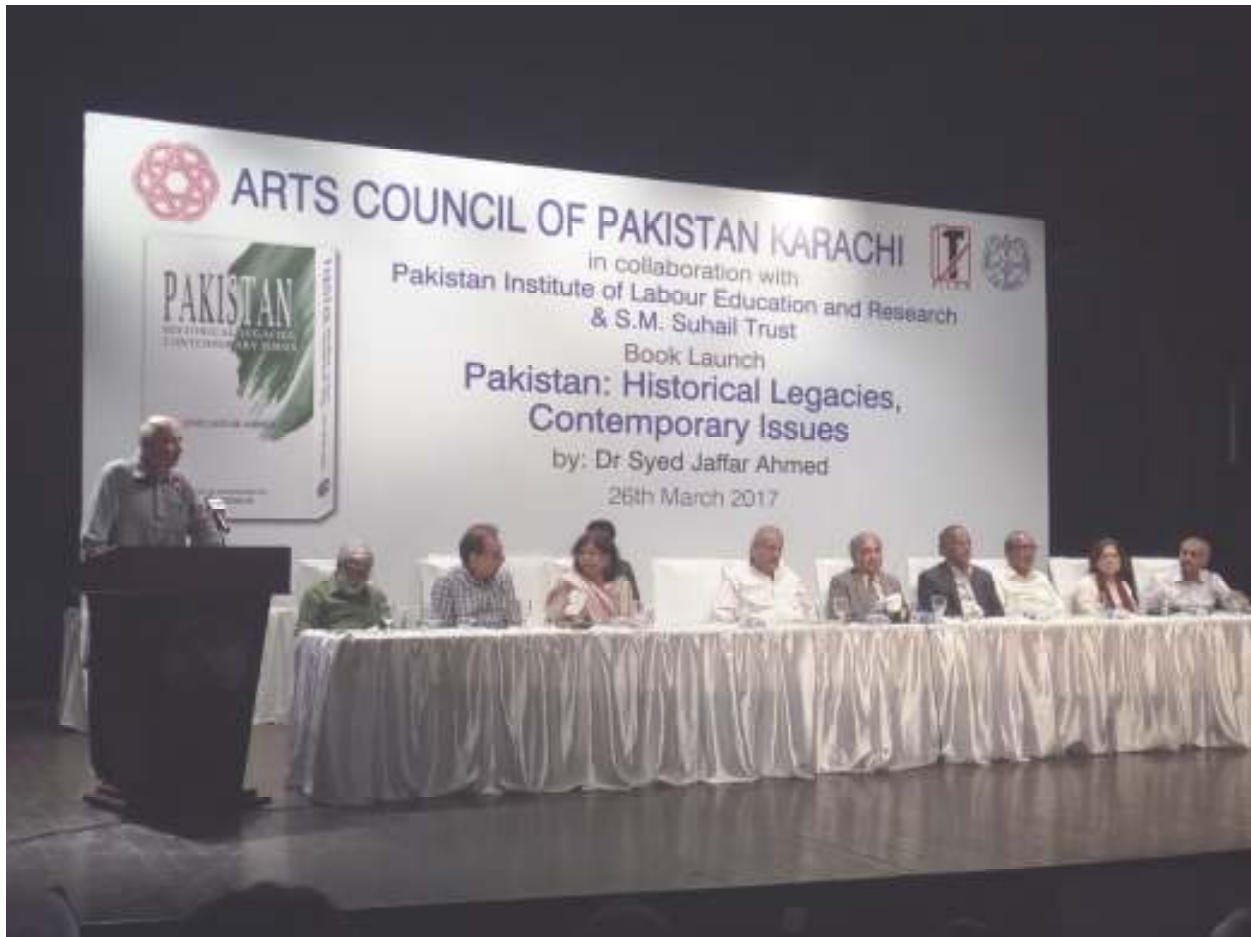


Launch of Dr. Jaffar Ahmed's book "Pakistan: Historical Legacies, Contemporary Issues"

"I will oppose Military Courts Bill, while being in Senate": Raza Rabbani



KARACHI, March 26: Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani has said that he will sit in the upper house Senate and oppose the military courts bill.

He was speaking as chief guest at a book launch of "Pakistan: Historical Legacies, Contemporary Issues" a compilation of essays and articles by Dr. Syed Jaffer Ahmed, jointly organised by Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), S.M. Suhail Trust and Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi at Arts Council Auditorium here on Sunday.

"I had voted in favour of military courts earlier despite the fact that I did not want." Raza Rabani spoke on critical issues the country is facing with. He said the original objective of Pakistan has been destroyed with a planning.

The 11th August speech of Quaid Azam was kept hidden for long time, he said adding that Gen. Zia while amending the Constitution through 8th amendment removed the word 'freely' which was later restored through 18th amendment.

Senator Rabbani said text books have been designed in such a way that democracy has been maligned in them. State through that kind of education wants to create citizens who do not realize the importance of democracy.

He said the state policies have promoted sectarianism. Minorities have been suppressed and history distorted intentionally, he added.

Senator Rabbani said the state is not in favour of any counter narrative. State, instead wants continuation of the old policy and narrative.

President of Supreme Court Bar Association Rasheed A. Razvi said Dr. Jaffar is among the few people in Pakistan who writes the truth. There is a consistency of the thought in the writings of Dr. Jaffar as he has done analysis of events right from 1857 mutiny to Martial Law of General Pervaiz Musharraf and 18th Amendment in this book.

Jamat-e-Islami and JUI parties in India are demanding secularism in India since 1947 but they are against secularism in Pakistan, he added.

The author Dr Jaffar said Pakistan Study Centre has published 63 books during his 18 year directorship. He said the establishment in Pakistan itself wants to have a counter narrative. "We are faced with third generation of terrorists. We need to highlight importance of democracy."

Political weaknesses has created a gap for military and civil establishment, he added.

Former Chief Minister of Balochistan Dr. Abdul Malik said his association with Dr. Jaffar started from the days of General Zia ul Haq Martial Law, when he came to Karachi. He said as a political worker he has learned a lot from Dr. Jaffar.

Dr. Malik said during 18th Amendment in the Constitution he and some other parliamentarians had tried to include Quaid-e- Azam' speech on 11th August 1847 as a preamble in the Constitution.

"We had tried to provide provincial autonomy but still there is resistance from establishment." Dr. Malik said political workers are marginalised in the current parliamentary system and he feared that if this trend continues only rich people can sit in the future assemblies.

Religious extremism is being injected in Balochistan, he said. "In my area, which is considered as secular, a large number of Jihadi Madressahs are flourishing."

He said Pakistan is still facing the same problems, which it faced at the time of independence. Many institutions are still reluctant to accept supremacy of the Parliament, he said. Pakistan is a multinational and multi lingual country and this fact must be accepted, Dr. Malik said.

Dr. Riaz Shaikh, Head of Social Sciences at Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) said Dr. Jaffar Ahmed is playing an important role for development of his students. "We must appreciate the work done by Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi under Dr. Jaffar's leadership," said Dr. Shaikh.

Dr. Jaffar has highlighted the 11th August speech of Quaid-e-Azam in his book and termed it Magna Carta, said Dr. Raiz adding that the new narratives need to be included in the curriculum. Trade unions and students unions need to be allowed to function.

Mahnaz Rahman, Resident Director Aurat Foundation said the book provides an overview of struggles in South Asia. Dr. Jaffar terms the 1857 movement as start of the struggles in the united India.

Senior writer Zahida Hina read out her essay on the writings of Dr. Jaffar Ahmed.

In his welcome address, PILER Executive Director Karamat Ali underlined the need for framing a People's Manifesto. He lauded the literary contribution of Dr. Jaffar Ahmed.

Book launch ceremony was also addressed by Dr. Tariq Suhail of S.M. Suhail Trust and President of Arts Council Karachi Ahmad Shah.

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