

#STORY

It Matters

I still go to the store every Friday. Now, sometimes, someone pays for my chocolate bar. And I let them.



My name's Veronica. I'm 80. I live alone in a small apartment above a hardware store in Brighton. I don't have much, but I get by. Pension. A little savings. My garden on the balcony mint, thyme, and one stubborn tomato plant.

Every Friday, I go to the same supermarket. Same time. Same cart. I buy tea, bread, canned soup, and always... always a chocolate bar. My treat.

One rainy afternoon, I was in line behind a young woman. She had two toddlers with her. One was crying softly. The other was holding a stuffed rabbit missing an eye.

She put everything on the belt, milk, eggs, rice, frozen peas, diapers. Her hands were shaking.

When the cashier said the total £38.76, she froze...

She pulled out a card. It declined. She tried another. Declined.

She whispered something to the cashier. "Can I take the milk and bread out?" Her voice broke.

"That's when I did something without thinking. I handed my card to the cashier. 'Put it all on mine.'"

The woman turned. Eyes wide. "No, I can't. You can," I said. "We all need help sometimes."

I smiled. Grabbed my small bag. Left before she could thank me.

I didn't do it for thanks. I remembered being young. Broke. Scared. Raising my son after my husband left. I once stood in a line just like that... and no one helped. So, I paid. And went home.

But here's what I didn't know.

"That woman, her name is Leila wrote about it on a community Facebook group that night."

"A stranger paid for my groceries today. An older lady with grey hair and kind eyes. She didn't lecture me. Didn't ask for anything. Just paid. And walked away. I cried in the car. My kids ate dinner that night because of her. If you know her, tell her... thank you isn't enough."

Someone commented, "Wait - was she wearing a yellow raincoat?"

Another said, "She lives above Thompson's Hardware, right? I see her watering plants every morning."

Within hours, people started showing up at my door. Not reporters. Not cameras. Neighbors.

They brought flowers. A jar of homemade jam. A hand-knit scarf.

One teenager left a note. "You paid for her. I'll pay forward. I'm tutoring kids at the youth center free now."

Then came the letters.

A nurse, "I stayed late night. Because you reminded me kindness matters."

A man recovering from addiction, "I returned a wallet I found. Thought of you."

And Leila? She visited me last week. Brought her kids. We sat on my balcony. Drank tea. The little one gave me the one-eyed rabbit. "He likes you," she said.

I still go to the store every Friday. Now, sometimes, someone pays for my chocolate bar. And I let them. Because kindness doesn't end. It just waits... for someone brave enough to start it.



# Freedom In 1947 Set The Tone Of India-Afghan Good Relations

The Treaty was not ratified by any legislative bodies of either sides, and hence, it is legally untenable. The Durand Line and the boundary (administrative border) between the Tribal Agencies and Settled Districts of the North-West Frontier Province (now Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) were simply delineating zones of influence and responsibility. Thus, it can be stated that it was not a legally-binding demarcated and delineated international boundary (IB) at all, but was rather a de-facto arrangement keeping the geopolitical developments in mind at that point of time.



It has always been and continues to be Afghanistan that constitutes the principal existential threat to Pakistan. After all, Afghanistan was the only country that had formally opposed the creation of Pakistan at the UN. And this was due to the geopolitical cartography drawn by the then British Colonial administrator, led by Sir Henry Mortimer Durand in 1893 through a pact with the then Amir of Afghanistan, Abdul Rahman, covering a vast stretch of terrains both rugged as well as plains (though strategically significant) of over around 1,519 miles. One of the major legal implications of the Durand Line Agreement of 1893 is that the delimitation of territories which created a de-facto frontier (not boundary) between Afghanistan and India. As part of the Agreement, the Amir retained his position in the Wakhan Corridor, thus separating the Tsarist Russian and British troops. At the same time, he also ensured his control over the 'Kashmir district' and the Wazir district of Birmal.' On the other hand, the Amir as part of the Treaty had agreed to transfer Pashtun-dominated regions like 'Chitral, Swat, New Chaman, Khashtan, Chagel, Noristan, Waziristan,' etc. The Treaty was not ratified by any legislative bodies of either sides, and hence, it is legally untenable. The Durand Line and the boundary (administrative border) between the Tribal Agencies and Settled Districts of the North-West Frontier Province (now Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) were simply delineating zones of influence and responsibility. Thus, it can be stated that it was not a legally-binding demarcated and delineated international boundary (IB) at all, but was rather a de-facto arrangement keeping the geopolitical developments in mind at that point of time.



Afghanistan in the 1950s and '60s.

This has been the ground of attrition between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It began in November 1949, India's ambassador to Afghanistan sent a letter to the foreign secretary, celebrating the positive shifts in the chilly relations between the two nations.

"As you are aware, the Indian consulates both at Kandahar and Jalalabad have started functioning," Ambassador Rup Chand wrote. "I have received reports from the respective Vice-Consuls and it is apparent that the prestige of India has gone high in the eyes of Afghans."

The thaw in the relations began after India became free. Until then, many Afghans had viewed India with hostility owing to the participation of British-Indian forces in the three Anglo-Afghan Wars. In the second of these conflicts, lasting from 1878 to 1880, Afghanistan lost control of the Khyber Pass and many Pashtun areas, which were handed to undivided India.

India's independence and partition changed two things. It dephenated India from Britain. And it transferred the areas seized in the Second Anglo-Afghan War from India to Pakistan, changing the object of Afghans' animosity.

So bitter were Afghans over Pakistan's control of the North West Frontier Province, which is dominated by Pathans, that they tried to keep the country out of the United Nations. "Afghanistan also has been bold in advancing her claim to Northwest frontier territories on the ground that Pathans inhabiting these areas on Afghanistan's border are racial brothers of Afghans."

## #THE TRUTH



King Zahir Shah with Afghan President, Hamid Karzai.

North West Frontier Province. Following the direction, both diplomats dispatched regular reports covering socio-economic and political issues, including the ways Afghans perceived India and Indians.

### American interest

To read their despatches today is to see the historic roots of some of the contemporary events in South Asia. In his letters, for instance, Kalra observed the growing American interest in Afghanistan.

Kandahar, at the time, had a small American community, consisting mainly of employees of the civil engineering company Morrison-Knudsen. "They are making roads, dams and other public works," Kalra wrote. "This is not exactly known on what terms they are working. It is said they charge a certain percentage over and above the actual expenditure, and then, the Afghan Government shares a certain portion of the net profit which the company gets in the long run."

Kalra picked up on a possible link between the American activities in Afghanistan and the Cold War. "There is a fairly good deal of rumour going round that the object of the Americans is not just commercial but they have political ends in view, i.e. the Americans want to know the strategic points from the military point of view which should stand them in good stead in the event of war with Russia," he wrote. "Some go to the length of saying that U.S.A. is financing the Afghan Government for these projects and that there is some understanding on the part of U.S.A. of advancing Afghanistan some loan."

Kalra said it was "difficult to get at the truth but one thing is certain that the Americans want to increase their influence in Afghanistan vis-a-vis the other countries, especially their greatest rival, Russia."

### Trade difficulties

Not just the Americans, in Kalra's telling, Afghans too were pleased with Indians. When independent



This is what the map of Afghanistan looked like before the Sikh annexation of the land.



King Mohammad Zahir Shah.

India's first diplomatic mission opened in Kandahar, locals welcomed it. "The Afghans expressed great pleasure on the opening of our Consulate when they came to attend the party given on the 1st instant," he wrote in an October 1949 report.

"The function was well attended. The Americans with their ladies added to the elegance of the show."

In the same report, Kalra said that Afghans had hopes from India. "While the top Government officials eulogise the Indian Government and its officers, the middle class is looking to India for rendering them some good in the field of trade whereby the living conditions of Afghan masses would be ameliorated."

One of the major obstacles to increased trade between the two countries was Pakistan. The military commander of Kandahar told Kalra that Pakistan was not letting Afghan traders send goods to India through its territory. "The smoothness of trade prevailing in the pre-partition days has been disturbed," Kalra wrote. "The difficulties according to some of the traders, I have seen, are manifold. In the first place, they have to spend time and money in getting a permit from Karachi."

This was the time Pakistan began accusing the Indian government of fanning the demand for Pashtunistan. While the correspon-

dence between Indian diplomats in Afghanistan in 1949 seems to suggest that New Delhi was merely observing the situation, it is true that there was support for the cause among ordinary Pashtuns in India. "The Pathans of Ahmedabad in India held a meeting under Maulana Mohd. Akbar in which all the participants expressed their readiness to do their utmost for the attainment of Azad Pashtunistan," Kalra wrote in a December 1949 report. "They also decided to request all the other countries to recognise Azad Pashtunistan. This progress has naturally perturbed the Pakistani authorities."

A similar meeting was held by Indian Pashtuns at the historic Fatehpuri Mosque in Old Delhi, where it was decided to garner support for the Pashtunistan movement. Pakistan used the news of these gatherings to step up claims that India was actively supporting the Pashtunistan movement. In its information campaign, a despatch says, Pakistan also spread the rumour that an official named Meher Chand was recruiting for the Indian Army in Afghanistan's border areas with the North West Frontier Province.

At this tense moment, Indian diplomats in Kandahar, Jalalabad and Kabul looked for signs of military build-ups to see whether Afghanistan would use force to settle the Pashtunistan question. The situation was particularly tense in January 1950 when Afghanistan and Pakistan exchanged strong words. The vice consul added that "while Pakistan's mainstay is their criticism of Afghans' economic structure and autocratic rule, the Afghans find fault with Pakistan's policy of putting several thousand innocent Pashtuns in jail for their only fault of demanding independent Pashtunistan. In this cold war, there is naturally an influx of wrong and fabricated news items."

The editorial said that "India has the right type of leaders like Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Abdul Kalam Azad, Sardar Patel and others. It has also vast resources and in a short span of its independent life, it has succeeded in creating friendly relations with all the Islamic countries of the East."

## National Recycling Day: Promoting a Sustainable Future

National Recycling Day, observed annually on November 15, highlights the importance of recycling in preserving our planet's resources and reducing waste. It encourages individuals, communities, and industries to rethink consumption patterns, segregate waste, and reuse materials wherever possible. Recycling helps lower pollution, conserve energy, and reduce landfill dependence, contributing to a cleaner, greener environment. Schools, businesses, and local governments often organise awareness campaigns, workshops, and collection drives to inspire eco-friendly practices. On this day, everyone is urged to make small, sustainable choices, from recycling paper, plastics, and metals to supporting products made from recycled materials, shaping a healthier planet for future generations.



A group of Afghan men in Kabul.

### Friendship treaty

While the ties between Kabul and Karachi were in a trefall, Afghanistan's relationship with India continued to thrive. On January 4, 1950, the two signed a five-year friendship treaty, mutually recognising each other's independence, agreeing to build cultural relations, and furthering cooperation in industry and agriculture.

"The news was received by the Afghan masses with joy and enthusiasm, but has aroused jealousy and suspicion in Pakistani circles," Kalra wrote. Soon after the treaty was signed, a radio telegraph service between India and Afghanistan became operational, with their ministers of communication exchanging messages.

A few weeks later, when India became a republic on January 26, 1950, Afghanistan welcomed the event, with Prime Minister Shah Mahmud Khan sending a congratulatory telegram to Nehru and Kabul Radio broadcasting a special programme. The next day a celebration was held in Kandahar for the upper classes and important traders.

"Sentiments of pleasure were expressed by one and all on the auspicious occasion," Kalra observed. A daily newspaper, *Tulu-i-Afghan*, marked the event with a front page editorial headlined 'India Becomes Republic' that read: "We have sanguine hopes that the new constitution, which is based on equality and unity, will give 32 crores of people of all religions, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian etc., equal rights, and as is clear from the lives of their leaders, everyone will have rights of all kinds of freedom."

The editorial said that "India has the right type of leaders like Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Abdul Kalam Azad, Sardar Patel and others. It has also vast resources and in a short span of its independent life, it has succeeded in creating friendly relations with all the Islamic countries of the East."

These sentiments guided the India-Afghanistan relationship, keeping them strong and friendly, until the 1970s, when Afghanistan became a major Cold War flashpoint cause, with regular radio broadcasts in Pashto, Urdu and Dari calling for self-determination for those living east of the Khyber Pass.



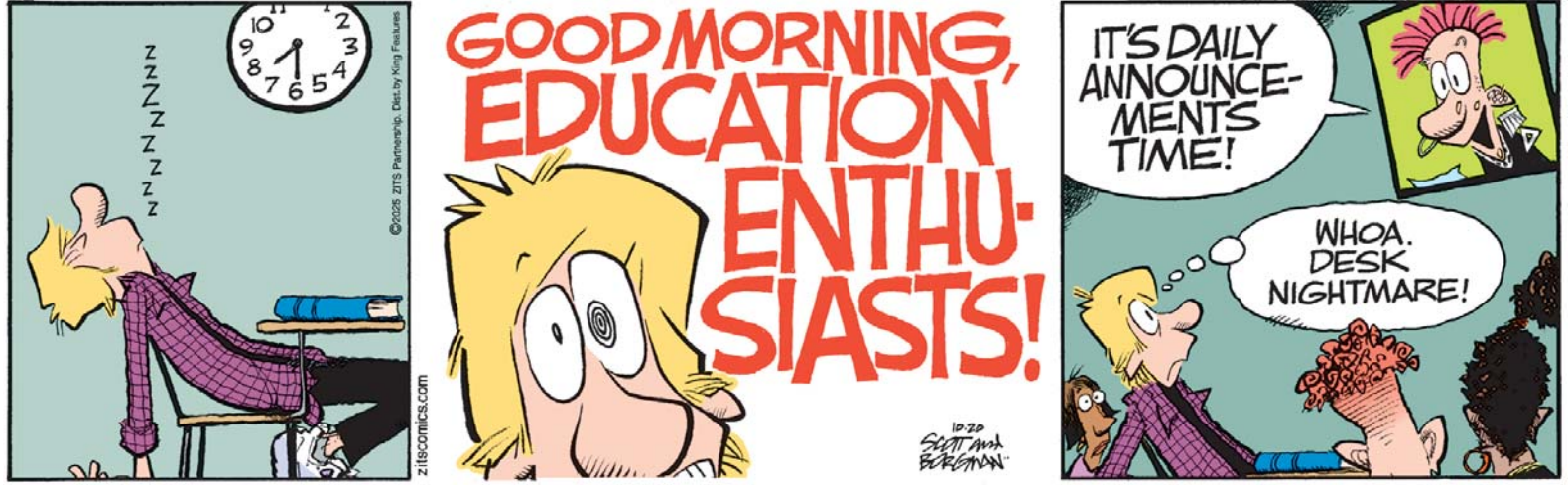
Flag of Pashtunistan, in Afghanistan.

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## #HEALTH

# Can't You Sleep!

Not All Insomnia Is the Same, In Fact, There May Be 5 Types

There's a new way of looking at insomnia. Rather than just considering sleep-related symptoms, a new study from the Netherlands branches out to look at personality traits and emotions and finds there are five types of insomnia.

The findings may pave the way for a better understanding of the causes of insomnia, as well as the development of more personalized treatments for the condition, the researchers said.

### Five types

Insomnia affects an estimated 10 percent of the population. The main symptoms involve difficulty falling or staying asleep, for example, people with the condition may lie awake for long periods before being able to fall asleep, or they may wake up too early and not be able to fall back to sleep, according to the National Institutes of Health.

But despite having similar symptoms, people with insomnia can vary widely in their response to treatment. In addition, attempts to find 'biomarkers' for the condition, like abnormalities in people's brain scans, have proved futile, the researchers said. These inconsistencies suggest that there may be more than one type of insomnia.

In an effort to find 'subtypes' of insomnia, the researchers analysed information from more than 4,000 people who filled out online surveys about their sleep habits and other traits as part of a project called the Netherlands Sleep Registry. Based on their survey responses, about 2,000 of these participants had insomnia. (These participants scored high on an insomnia-related survey but did not have a confirmed diagnosis.) To identify subtypes, the researchers went beyond looking at sleep-related symptoms and considered other factors, including personality traits, mood, emotions and response to stressful life events.

The study authors found that participants with insomnia tended to fit into one of five categories:

- **Type 1:** People with type 1 insomnia tended to have high levels of distress (meaning high levels of negative emotions like anxiety and worry) and low levels of happiness.
- **Type 2:** People with type 2 insomnia had moderate lev-



els of distress, but their levels of happiness and experiences of pleasurable emotions tended to be relatively normal.

- **Type 3:** People with type 3 insomnia also had moderate levels of distress but had low levels of happiness and reduced experiences of pleasure.
- **Type 4:** People with type 4 insomnia typically had low levels of distress, but they tended to experience long-lasting insomnia in response to a stressful life event.
- **Type 5:** People with type 5 insomnia also had low levels of distress, and their sleep disorder wasn't affected by stressful life events.

These subtypes were consistent over time: When participants were surveyed again five years later, most of them maintained the same subtype.

### Personalized treatment?

The researchers also found that people with different insomnia subtypes differed in terms of their response to treatment and their risk of depression. For example, people with subtypes 2

and 4 saw the most improvement in their sleep symptoms after taking a benzodiazepine (a type of tranquilizer), while people with subtype 4 did not see improvement from this type of drug. In addition, people with subtype 2 responded well to a type of talk therapy called cognitive behavioural therapy, while people with subtype 4 did not. People with subtype 1 had the greatest lifetime risk of depression.

The findings suggest that certain insomnia treatments may work best for certain subtypes, and future research should examine this. In addition, identifying people with insomnia who are at greatest risk of depression may lead to ways to help prevent depression in this group, the researchers said.

In an editorial accompanying the study, Tsuyoshi Kitajima, of the Department of Psychiatry at Fujita Health University School of Medicine in Japan, said the work shows that "robust subtyping is possible" among a group of people with insomnia.

However, Kitajima said some sleep doctors may have concerns about these subtypes because they are largely based on factors that aren't directly related to sleep. But Kitajima noted that some of the subtypes described in the new study bear similarities to previously accepted (though now abandoned) categories of insomnia. For example, people with subtypes 1 and 2 tended to develop symptoms early in life, in childhood or adolescence. This is similar to symptoms seen in people with so-called 'idiopathic insomnia,' a traditional category of insomnia in which people develop the condition early in life without an identifiable cause. (However, idiopathic insomnia is no longer listed as a type of insomnia in the diagnostic manual known as the International Classification of Sleep Disorders, Third Edition.)

Kitajima added that it would be beneficial to confirm the findings in people who have actually been diagnosed with insomnia. The study authors also noted that participants volunteered to take part in a sleep-related study, and this group may not necessarily be representative of the population as a whole. There could also be additional subtypes that have yet to be identified.

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman