

Dear Mustafa,

11th February, 2013

The house next door of where I am staying in Islamabad has a tiger in a cage on the back lawn; from the terrace I could throw a well aimed piece of kebab to the poor creature for a quick nibble.

The enclosure is small and guarded by a number of rather jittery looking men. In the morning and evening and sometimes in the night the tiger growls...loudly. All living creatures fall silent as we listen to something more powerful in our midst; when the growling ceases we all start to breath again. You see the tiger's space is really not that secure for with a jump and a scramble he would be free, easily eating the kebab out of my hand, perhaps along with my hand.

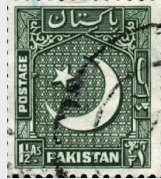
The tiger's future is unsure. The owner is related to a significant member of the current government and it is doubtful he will retain his parliamentary seat in this May's

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upcoming elections. The family's 'assembled' gains may be at risk and already I have seen two flat screen TVs being loaded onto a removal truck.

Tigers are less easy to move and so what will become of it? Released late one night into the neighbourhood? Given to a new master? Or simply abandoned to its fate?

Such is the fate of this beautiful animal - alongside the country I am visiting. The tiger deserves its natural domain, as does the country it is caged in. Perhaps the first democratic transition in Pakistan shall set both parties free.

See you soon - Chris