

The Daily Star

India's diplomatic strategy



N recent days, it appears that India has embarked on a twopronged diplomatic strategy. While it has been making efforts in improving bilateral ties with its rival Pakistan, it has also engaged to strengthen its relations with Pakistan's close neighbours.

In March 2000, President Clinton's stopover for a few hours in Pakistan as against his visit with his daughter for several days in India provided one singular mes-sage that the US recognised India as the regional power in Asia and enough respect must be given to it. When the Bush administration came to office in January 2001, China was its major concern and India was to be its counter-weight to contain China's supremacy in Asia-Pacific region. The September 11, 2001 incidents changed the scenario. China that was regarded in January as a "strategic competitor" became in September of that year a "strategic partner" of the US in the war against global terrorism.

In South Asia, Pakistan became a sought-after country as a platform to dismantle the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Pakistan's military President Musharraf seized this opportunity not only for his political survival but also to bolster Pakistan's position against India. Although the US needs India, Pakistan's assistance became a priority for its immediate strategy and the relationship between Pakistan and the US dramatically improved. India could not persuade the US to consider Pakistan's alleged assistance to Kashmiri militants as "state terrorism" and India was not successful in the strategy of corner-ing Pakistan on that account.

Political observers believe that India's recent move of reconciliatory efforts with Pakistan is based on pragmatism. It was reported that even a limited nuclear war between the two countries would kill at least 3 million people and a full-scale war between the two countries has virtually been eliminated. Another security matters in the region and reason is that a series of zero-sum games played by both countries in the adjacent oceans. Iran-India

has yielded a negative-sum game over the years. The continuing arms race has created a less stable relationship between strategic forces of the two countries, endangering strategic perceptions and errors on each other's strength. India's former Foreign Secretary T.N. Kaul in his book "*A Diplomat's Diary*" (2000: Macmillan: Delhi) stated that : " Now that both India and Pakistan have nuclear capability, it is necessary more than ever before for both countries.....to attempt a peaceful, bilateral settle-

axis is a new strategy that will diplomatically perhaps corner Pakistan.

promoting national interests at the global and regional levels.

tional

The recent announcement of India's Prime Minister's visit to China next month is an astute strategic move. Both countries have glorious past and ancient cultures that have withstood and yet imbibed many elements of ther cultures. The basic strength of both countries lies in the capac-ity of their people to work hard in the hope that their skills and the spirit of entrepreneurship and

Uighurs dislike Chinese domination over the province and have been waging a low-intensity guer-rilla warfare against the Chinese forces. China does not appear to be enthusiastic in supporting the cause of Kashmir because it faces similar demand from Tibet and Xinjiang. Another important gain India will have is to send a message to Pakistan that Indo-China relations are getting close and Pakistan may not be able to depend on China for its support on Kashmir.

government in Kabul appear to be gaining a solid ground because India supported the Northern Alliance during the former Taliban regime. Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Abdullah is a key member of the Northern Alliance and is a Tajik. He visited India many times to strengthen its relations with India. Both the Foreign Minister and President Karzai were educated in India and have a soft corner for it. The Karzai government however maintained a "correct" relationship with Pakistan and

Furthermore India is aware that

possession of Agni missile with a range of 2,500 km as against Pakistan's Ghauri missile that has a range of 2,000 km. On conventional arms India has a much larger military personnel of ,298,000 as against Pakistan's

620,000. India spends yearly on defence an amount equivalent to Pakistan's entire annual national budget and India increases on average its defence expenditure by 5 per cent per cent every year. According to one estimate, India and Pakistan have already spent US\$ 60 billion dollars on conventional weapons

Pakistan. In addition India is in

At one time India considered itself encircled by Pakistan's allies from the Bay of Bengal to the Per-sian Gulf. In the new Indian strategy, it appears that the Sino-Pakistan umbilical cord may be snapped and India's friends are likely to encircle Pakistan. In that situation, it will be very difficult for Pakistan to play a wippable diplo. Pakistan to play a winnable diplo-matic game with India. India's strategy of drawing it into a close embrace of Afghanistan, Iran and China could provide a firm foot-hold to resolve its differences with Pakistan more easily than before. For India, it connotes a great step to its efforts at promoting national interests at the global and regional levels.

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ment of various problems including the J & K question" In the light of this reality, India

has devised its strategy to restore not only normal relations with Pakistan but also seek consolidation of its relations with other Asian countries that are important to Pakistan.

It is remarkable that New Delhi has been able to consolidate its relations with Iran, a neighbour and a traditional friend of Pakistan. Pakistan diplomatically lost Iran when it supported the former Taliban regime which oppressed the Shi'ite Hazara community in central Afghanistan. Iran opposed the Taliban regime and supported the Tajik-Uzbek controlled Northern Alliance that was opposed to the fundamentalist regime in Kabul India recently strengthened its defence relations with Iran and concluded an agreement for sup-ply of oil to India. If Pakistan hesitates to allow its territory for the oil pipeline, India and Iran may bypass Pakistan altogether and lay pipeline under the sea from Iran to ndia.

National interests govern bilat-eral relations. Even during the Shah's days in the late 60s, Pakistan attempted to make special commercial arrangements with Iran on oil and opened a unit in Pakistan's embassy in Tehran but hard com-mercial interests of Iran frustrated the plan. However, Iran-India relations have always been based on mutual beneficial relations. Both Iran and India are endowed with immense natural resources, are regional powers and in conjunction they can play a vital role in

natural resources will be able to improvement of Sino-Indian match that of developed countries. relations would not harm US inter-Their economic performance is quite good, given the dull internaests and in fact such improvement could strengthen international economic environment. peace and security in the interest of India has achieved almost 6 per cent of economic growth and China nearly 8 per cent this year. all countries. It is certainly in the interests of all the three countries --America, India and China -- to bring about improvement in rela-India's pre-occupation with tions of each other with the other two, provided it is not at the

expense of any one of them.

BOTTOM LINE

India's strategy of drawing it into a close embrace of Afghanistan, Iran and China could provide a firm foothold to

resolve its differences with Pakistan more easily than before. For India, it connotes a great step to its efforts at

China as a major threat to its security appears to be inconsistent with growing trend toward friendly relations between the two Asian giants. In 1994 India and China signed the Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement which addressed their dispute over their Himalayan borders. In November 1996, China and India agreed in principle on mutual troop withdrawals from disputed areas along a 2,500- mile frontier and pledged that neither would use its military capability against the other.

Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China in 1988 and for more than a decade no Indian Prime Minister visited China, although China's former President and General Secretary of he Communist Party Jiang Zemin visited India in 1996. The impend-ing visit of India's Prime Minister is taking place at a time when China's new leaders have consolidated their positions in domestic politics and India's Prime Minister's visit is likely to boost their political image in the country.

India, on the other hand, will politically gain from the visit mainly in two ways. India will be able to obtain assurance from China against terrorism in Kashmir because China itself faces a similar situation in its Uighur Muslim dominated north- western prov-ince of Xinjiang. Most of the

some say the relationship is lukewarm because of Pakistan's past support and diplomatic recogni-tion to the former Taliban regime. While India has been on a diplo matic drive in normalisation of its

relations with Pakistan, on 9th May t has tested for a second time a short-range-air-to air missile (Astra) from the east coast of Orissa. The missile which has a

range of 25 to 40 kilometres is India's relations with the Karzai strategically relevant in relation to



A true women's emancipator

ESAM SOHAIL

ROM the jaws of certain defeat he forged a victory that saved his country. Amidst the ruins of a degenerate empire, he created a **L** noble republic. Under his tutelage a culture stymied into superstition and medievalism was brought into the light of the twentieth century. Yet, none of these he considered the most lasting achievement of a life that began on May 19, 1881. Rather it was his social revolution of gender equity that left an indelible mark on his country, and a vision worth emulating for other similar eastern societies

Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the *Ataturk* or Father of the Turks, delivered his country from the rapacious victors of the First World War, freed her people from the clutches of a despotic sultan-caliph, and faced off the threats from the Communists of Lenin. Yet, after all the battles and attendant diplomacy he inherited a free nation where half the citizens were not free. The Ottoman sultans, like other lascivious potentates, were used to harems and polygamy while their subjects took the royal cue and treated their own womenfolk no better than child-bearing housemaids. 'We can go on like this in the new Turkey or have our women be our partners in every national endeavour-the latter option leads to the path of civiliza-tion', Kemal Pasha told his conservative countrymen. Unlike many other tall talking statesmen, he turned around and vigorously led his country on the path that he preached.

Ignoring the loud shrieks of the reactionaries who apparently feared unveiled women and educated girls more than the Devil himself, Ataturk's parliament passed a series of dazzling reforms in the 1920s. Education was made compulsory for boys and girls, segregation and polygamy were outlawed as being instruments of misogynistic repression, and the civil code was updated to give equal treatment to women in matters of divorce, in breiting a child custody and dimony. Unwilling to simply promulege code was updated to give equal treatment to women in matters of divorce, inheritance, child-custody, and alimony. Unwilling to simply promulgate legislation, Kemal Pasha took upon himself to make regular tours of the countryside to check on the implementation of reforms and charged local governors and garrison commanders to be responsible for the same as well. Those who attempted to exploit religious feelings and superstitions to block reforms were severely punished under Kemalist statutes that prohibited the abuse of religion for political purposes.

The results of Ataturk's drive to free the mothers and daughters of Turkey were becoming obvious even in his own lifetime. Two generations before their Western European and American counterparts, Turkish women were flying combat aircraft and sitting in parliament in their own right. Freed from the chains of prejudice that kept them veiled, silent, and submissive, Turkey's women of post-Ataturk generations became unlimited partners with their male compatriots in every sphere of national activity. The soul of the great man must have found special pleasure on that day not too long ago when Tansu Ciller became Turkey's first female prime minister.

Shorn of the legacy of socially imposed gender inequality, a modern, powerful, and respected Turkey is on the verge of joining that exclusive first world club, the European Union. Bereft of the guiding hand of a Kemal Pasha, many of her neighbours and historical contemporaries paint, however, quite a different picture. More often than not, these neigh-bouring countries are the poster children of despotism, religious fanati-cism, anti-women repression, and global pariah status. What a difference one man makes!

The courage of that one man in taking head-on the prejudices of a thousand years is an example worthy of emulating in any eastern society, specially one like ours where historical and cultural links with the Turkish people go back generations. We do not need Mustafa Kemal High Schools or Kemal Ataturk Avenues in our cities as much as we need local Mustafa Kemals in every city, village, and town of our country.

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Humanising the blue planet

BILLY I AHMED

T this moment, human beings are considered in a way which can provide no solutions to the problems they face. The human beings freedoms are severely restricted, they are exploited at work swindled, deceived and hurt by a lack of communication with self, family and the people around. This is happening because of a system working with physical, economic, racial, moral, and psychological violence. This is lifestyle based on selfishness. All these increase the underestimation of both human values and the meaning of life. To spur this change of underestimation of human values and the meaning of life. To spur this change of underestimation of burnen values a great change needs to be change of underestimation of human values and the hearing of hier. To spin this brought in. These changes when come will bring about a true human society and then it will be possible to recover the value of human being and the meaning of life. To do this people from different cultures, countries and belief should become organised, grow and strengthen themselves. Then only the aspiration of social change and personal development can be achieved. Summing up, "treat others the same way we like to be 'eated

Social change in Bangladesh The traditional-modern interface

M.AFSARUDDIN

social problems; and (v) empowerused to depend for their livelihood on cultivation. Cities, more or less, ment of women. were administrative in nature Tremendous demographic rather than industrial and comchanges have taken place since the mercial. Bangladesh is passing birth of Bangladesh. By the through transition from traditional improvement of living conditions to modern, from folk to urban from and medical care, mortality rate town and village to city and the has greatly fallen. Modern techforces responsible for this transforniques, applied on a mass basis mation in Bangladesh and to varvunder government sponsorship ing degrees in all developing have achieved almost miraculous nations, just as in England in the result in the control of infectious eighteenth century and in the diseases and other ailments among United States in the nineteenth our peoples. The alarming rate of century are industrialization and population has been controlled urbanization brought about by the and the present rate of population Industrial Revolution. This transis 1.37 per annum. formation actually started with the Nevertheless our population is replete with poverty, malnutrition, British administration. But the important point which we must poor standard of public health and bear in mind is that the British illiteracy which constitutes imporadministration was super imposed tant problems for an emergent area on the sub-continent. It remained

the situation.

recent years, the use of transistor radio, TV. satellite TV. in our rural and interior areas has revolutionised the communication process. Thus the mass media do reflect the ambivalence of our society from the traditional to the modern and have a dramatic impact on the people. But it should be pointed out here that the use of mass media in our society is not an unmixed blessing. It is true that our people are becoming increasingly aware what is going on around the world in the field of science, technology and socio-political development. But the effects accruing from the display of foreign movies and the circulation of foreign obscene literature pose a threat to our cultural values. We are afraid that if

predominantly an agricultural mass-media communication, and for their children. Although the have attained tremendous power social problems. What tends to borrowing Robert Merton's terminology, is that all members of the society aspire after success in life as a goal defined by the mass media, and reinforced by observation as social problems like juvenile delinquency, beggary, prostitution and crime are being created. As for example, the delinquent is the one who does not have equal access to the legitimate means for attaining success (e.g. literacy, family, soli darity, money, education, etc.) and therefore is tempted to use illegitimate (i.e. illegal) means to obtain the goals which a changing society regards as desirable. The traditional concept of womanhood dependent entirely on male partners is gradually changing and now to some extent the this trend tends to persist, there will be greater probability of a decision making power is being taken over by the womenfolk. This has been greatly contributed by the rapid development of ready made garment industries in Bangladesh which employ 1.5 million workers mostly women and micro-credit provided by specialised agencies as ell as NGOs. The NGOs have also played a very positive role in empowerment of women. It may be evident from the above discussion that a "Bangladeshi" as a social actor belongs simulta-neously to two different social change from "ideational" to systems. On the one hand, he is a sensate" in our cultural dynamics. member of a joint family and a So far as our cultural ethos is contradition-bound society; while at cerned there is a moral demand the same time he functions in opposed to the Western notion of various roles that are supposed to positiveness and pragmatism. be free of these twin loyalties. Some social thinkers are, therefore, Pertinently it may be mentioned of the opinion that in our social here that because of the impact of thinking there is a preponderance western education and technolbelief in nature and divinity. An ogy, he is in fact seems to be nonindividual's actions are believed to traditional, competitive and makbe justified not only in his own ing decisions as a modern free lifetime but even beyond. Thus individual. As a result of this pro-Darwinism, which had a great cess, it may so happen that it could influence on western thought, create tensions and strain within a could possibly not have found a personality. After considering the place in our society, even now in Bangladeshi situation it can be said our society an individual's behavthat though material development iour and values are interrelated as is being taking place, it may not part and whole. change our ethic from traditional to Western. This is partly because Bangladesh is in transition, due of the fact that our way of life basito rapid social change, from tradi-tional to modern society. But cally reflects some glaring differ because this transition is not yet ences from Western mode of life and code of ethics. How far this complete and because Bangladesh ethos of ours could really stand is still pre-industrial, it is mixed society, no longer wholly traditheir test against the Western ethics and ethos accompanying tional, not yet fully modern. Therewith technology and science is difficult to say at this stage of social fore, whether economic, political, religious or familiar norms are development. It is an interesting examined, there is a conflict setting for the sociologist to between traditional and modern mores, neither of which is promiobserve, study and analyse.

OCIAL change is the process by which alterations occur in the structure and function of society. Society can be looked upon as a process, as a series of interactions between human beings; each person stimulating another person and responding to the stimuli from the other person. No social life is possible without such interactions. This is why communication is basic to social life. We define society as a collection of individuals and social groups that perform different functions and that work together in joint problem solving toward common goals. The structure of a society is the pattern of relationships between individuals and social groups. Function refers to be consequences of these relationship. Desirable consequences are the functional effects that help individuals and social groups achieve common goals and solve problem. Undesirable consequences are the dysfunctional effects that block achievement. To understand change, we must therefore examine the strains and tensions inherent in every social system.

Bangladesh is a new state which emerged out of Pakistan through a bloody civil war in 1971. It rivals Indonesia as the largest predominantly Muslim nation and it stands a link between the South and South East Asia. How she came to possess a predominance of Muslim population and a distinct culture of its own can hardly be understood without some reference to our social structure.

The establishment of British rule in Bengal in 1757 set in train a significant series of changes which ultimately wore to affect profoundly every stratum of our society. Before that time the life of the people centered around the village and the village community. And the villages were more or less self sufficient, the villages did not have to look much beyond their frontiers to meet their daily needs and, therefore, their thinking was confined to the village and its surroundings. This moral-centered life began to break up with developed means of communication and the money economy intro-duced by British rule. As a result, profound changes took place in the older types of institutions and social relations. This induced pattern of social changes also affected the age old stratification pattern which was based on the concept of ascribed status.

We are aware that ours was

has transferred its function on the western pattern to some extent, the older values and customs tend to persist. As for example, modern educated Bangladesh women can be found following the values of traditional womanhood.

In dealing with the emergence of new social classes, it is necessary for us to point out that the status of a man was determined by birth before the introduction of the process of industrialization and urbanization. As a matter of fact, it was not at all difficult to determine the position of a man under feudalism. But with the achievement of Bangladesh our social structure is undergoing a rapid change in the filed of industry, commerce and education. The exodus of Hindu middle class was also a contribu-

It may be evident that a "Bangladeshi" as a social actor belongs simultaneously to two different social systems. On the one hand, he is a member of a joint family and a tradition-bound society; while at the same time he functions in various roles that are supposed to be free of these twin loyalties. Pertinently it may be mentioned here that because of the impact of western education and technology, he is in fact seems to be non-traditional, competitive and making decisions as a modern free individual.

of social uplift. Family planning programmes founded by the donor structurally divorced from the rest of the community. That is why the sub-continent did not develop in countries and multilateral agenthe way western Europe did. cies as well as national government are making a headway among the

This process of development took a new pattern, with the achievement of Bangladesh. The administration committed to the welfare of the people and thereby it released new forces to usher in a new era of change.

In the context of our present analysis of social change with reference to Bangladesh, concept social change needs to be defined. In the words of Maclver, almost as family members. social change is a process responsive to many types of change, to changes in the man-made conditions of living, to changes in attitudes and beliefs of man and so fourth. In explaining the cogent factors of changes in our social pattern and thereby pointing out the trends two elements have played a decisive part. First, west-ern science and technology, and secondly, social planning by the government. The influence of technology has been perceptible in different areas of social life. To be this change is more predominant specific about the areas of change, in urban and industrial area than in it involves (i) a demographic patrural. In urban areas, husband and tern; (ii) a size, scope and structure of the family; (iii) emergence of wife have almost become equal partners in life and they exist for new social class; (iv) revolution in each other and they together exist

tory factor in the development of new social classes. There is a tremendous demand among all classes of people for general and technical education. Thus with the people of our country who are spread of educational facilities. a ncreasingly aware of the gravity of greater amount of social mobility is going on. Our society now spreads The age-old family structure of out right to the small township Bangladesh is joint in nature. Such through a steady percolation of the white collar worker graduating families generally consist of parfrom the universities since their ents, their sons, daughters, daughvery inception. The various ter-in-laws and in some cases. bureaucracies in government, other relatives. Even the domestic commerce, banking, insurance, industry, are other facets of the servants are looked upon as part and parcel of the household, same process. In addition to this are the elite entrepreneurial Since the second world war with groups which are spread at all the urban centers in Bangladesh. This increasing urbanization and expanding industrialization the group has in its rank now enough structure of the joint family pattern professionally trained members has broken up. And it has been in who run chambers of commerce the process of replacement by and associations of industrialists. nuclear family. Industrialization There is still one more segment in and urbanization have not only this urban society and that is the affected the family size, but has urban working class in industry, in also profoundly affected the attidocks and in transport. As a result tudes of the different members of of this there is a change from the the family. Husband-wife relation ascribed to the concept of achieved has, consequently, changed. But status.

> Let us now discuss the transition brought about in our society because of communication media While mass communication and mass media (Press, Radio, TV, etc)

nent and this may be a cause of anomie and greater normlessness to the development of various

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Every human being has the right to choose freely and any violation of this freedom is nothing but violence. The objective of humanising should be: "Nothing above the human being and no human being below another". It may be mentioned that the Humanist Movement started at the end of 1960's. Mario Rodriguez Cobos, better known as Silo, is a Latin American thinker, writer and creator of new humanism. Since then the Human Movement or Humanising the Blue Planet has spread to over 100 countries throughout Asia, Africa, Europe and America. The Humanist Movement develops different activities and creates various organisations. which are suitable to work on specific areas. For example: The Čommunity for Human Development works in the cultural area and the Humanist Party in the political area. Examples of other associations and organisations are: the Humanist News Agencies, the International Federation for Human Aid, the World Centre for Human Studies, the World with no Wars Foundation, the Humanist Economic Network and Humanist for Health Other tools to spread the humanist ideas and the growth of Humanist Movement are meeting centres, newsletters, electronic media, publishing houses, and Humanist Clubs of different kinds.

The Humanist people besides developing such activities to change the world should understand that first such change should take place in their inner self. Therefore, to get in touch with their inner force they should be able to communicate better, so to strengthen their faith and their meaning in life. For that they should organise to meet, interact in different places which could be a community centre, school, university and work place This will help each human being to decide what is most important in his/her life: to know whether they want to continue living and under which condition they want to do it. At the present moment, humanism stresses the moral duty of every human being of struggling against growing violence and injustice. To face these problems effectively we have to give a new direction to our lives, trying to achieve coherence among what we think and what we do. We are living in close relation with others and it is precisely by working together with others we will act to give a favourable direction to our situation. So, even when we are acting very specifically in our immediate environment, we never forget the global situation affecting all human beings and they need our help just as we do need the help of others to "Humanise the blue planet".

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All health information to keep you up to date

Chicken pox

Chicken pox is one of the most common childhood diseases. Usually, it's no more than a mild illness involving fever, headaches and itchy spots. But lot of children develop serious complications like pneumonia and inflammation of the brain and sometimes it can even be fatal. It became also life threatening when bacteria enters an infected sore and spreads through the body.

But the misery of chicken pox should soon become a thing of the past in the near future due to a chicken pox vaccine, soon to be released in Australia. The vaccine, offers more than 90 per cent protection. It's been used for the last five years in the US with a very low incidence of side effects. May be in the future, the vaccine could wipe out the chicken pox like that of small pox.

Did you know?

There are 12,000 species of flies. A female fly is able to lay 1000 or more eggs during her two-week lifetime. Flies carry nearly a million different strains of bacteria. Next:Around the world.