

# India's diplomatic strategy



HARUN UR RASHID

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.

axis is a new strategy that will diplomatically perhaps corner Pakistan. The recent announcement of India's Prime Minister's visit to China next month is an astute strategic move.

Uighurs dislike Chinese domination over the province and have been waging a low-intensity guerrilla warfare against the Chinese forces.

government in Kabul appear to be gaining a solid ground because India supported the Northern Alliance during the former Taliban regime.

Pakistan. In addition India is in 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.

In recent days, it appears that India has embarked on a two-pronged 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 message that the US recognised India as the regional power in Asia and enough respect must be given to it.

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.

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.

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.

National interests govern bilateral 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 commercial interests of Iran frustrated the plan.

natural resources will be able to match that of developed countries. Their economic performance is quite good, given the dull international economic environment.

India's pre-occupation with China as a major threat to its security appears to be inconsistent with a growing trend toward friendly relations between the two Asian giants.

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 the Communist Party Jiang Zemin visited India in 1996.

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 province of Xinjiang.

improvement of Sino-Indian relations would not harm US interests and in fact such improvement could strengthen international peace and security in the interest of all countries. It is certainly in the interests of all the three countries-- America, India and China -- to bring about improvement in relations of each other with the other two, provided it is not at the expense of any one of them.

India's relations with the Karzai

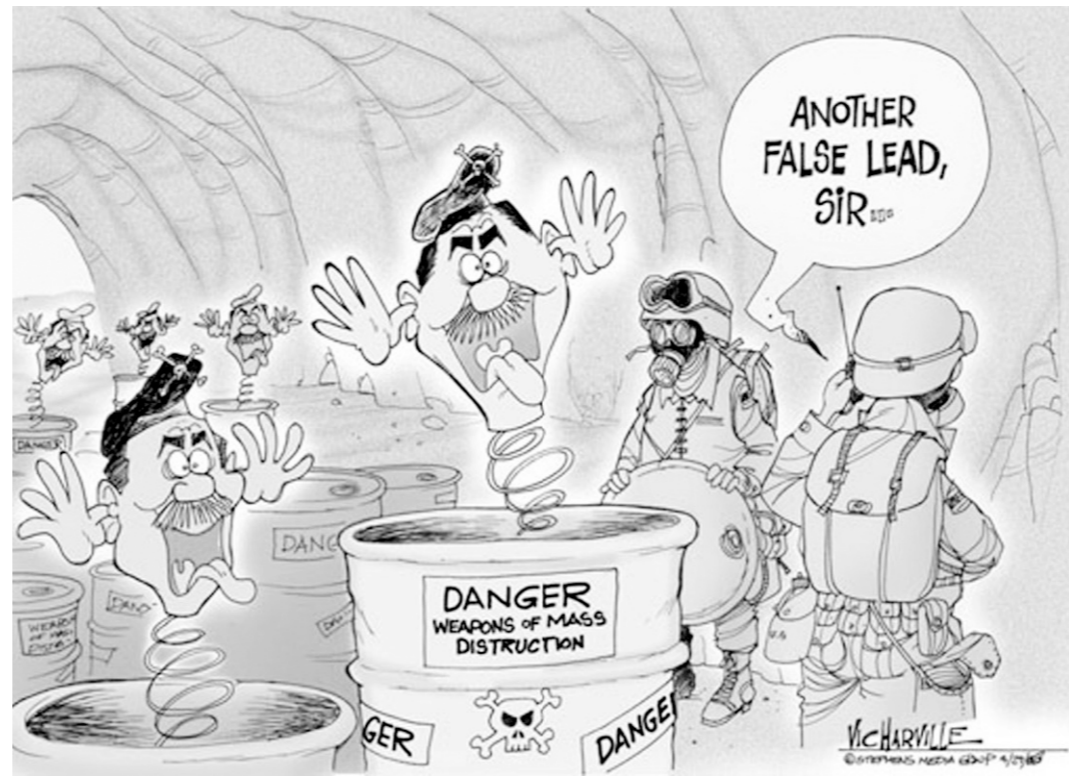
some say the relationship is lukewarm because of Pakistan's past support and diplomatic recognition to the former Taliban regime.

While India has been on a diplomatic drive in normalisation of its relations with Pakistan, on 9th May it has tested for a second time a short-range air-to air missile (Astra) from the east coast of Orissa.

At one time India considered itself encircled by Pakistan's allies from the Bay of Bengal to the Persian 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.

For India, it connotes a great step to its efforts at promoting national interests at the global and regional levels.

Barrister Harun ur Rashid is a former Bangladeshi Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.



# Social change in Bangladesh

## The traditional-modern interface

M. AFSA RUDDIN

SOCIAL 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.

predominantly an agricultural society. Our vast number of people used to depend for their livelihood on cultivation. Cities, more or less, were administrative in nature rather than industrial and commercial.

social uplift. Family planning programmes founded by the donor countries and multilateral agencies as well as national government are making a headway among the people of our country who are increasingly aware of the gravity of the situation.

Tremendous demographic changes have taken place since the birth of Bangladesh. By the improvement of living conditions and medical care, mortality rate has greatly fallen. Modern techniques, applied on a mass basis under government sponsorship have achieved almost miraculous result in the control of infectious diseases and other ailments among our peoples.

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.

structurally divorced from the rest of the community. That is why the sub-continent did not develop in the way western Europe did.

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 of social change needs to be defined. In the words of MacIver, 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.

mass-media communication, and consequent emergence of new social problems; and (v) empowerment of women.

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.

Nevertheless our population is replete with poverty, malnutrition, poor standard of public health and illiteracy which constitutes important problems for an emergent area

for their children. Although the institution of family in Bangladesh has transferred its function on the western pattern to some extent, the older values and customs tend to persist.

have attained tremendous power in modern Bangladesh society, in recent years, the use of transistor radio, TV, satellite TV, in our rural and interior areas has revolutionised the communication process.

change from "ideational" to "sensate" in our cultural dynamics. So far as our cultural ethos is concerned there is a moral demand opposed to the Western notion of positiveness and pragmatism.

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)

social problems. What tends to happen to a society in transition, 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.

The traditional concept of womanhood dependent entirely on male partners is gradually changing and now to some extent the decision making power is being taken over by the womenfolk.

It may be evident from the above discussion 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.

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.

# A true women's emancipator

ESAM SOHAH

FROM the jaws of certain defeat he forged a victory that saved his country. Amidst the ruins of a degenerate empire, he created a noble republic. Under his tutelage a culture stymied into superstition and medievalism was brought into the light of the twentieth century.

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 in Lenin. Yet, after all the battles and attendant diplomacy he inherited a free nation where half the citizens were not free.

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.

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.

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.

Esam Soha, a social activist lives in Kansas, USA

# Humanising the blue planet

BILLY I AHMED

AT 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.

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".

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.

Billy I Ahmed is a researcher.

### HAVE A NICE DAY

**Dr. Rubailur Murshed**

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 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.

### 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.**

M. Afzaruddin is Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka.