Dhaka, Sunday, July 21, 1991

Himalayas: Handle with Care

A major confrontation between developers and ecology conscious experts is brewing up in the foothills of the Himalayas. The bone of contention is the 3-billion-US dollar Tehri Dam which is expected to generate 2,400 megawatts of electricity, irrigate 667,000 acres of land and supply 162 million gallons of fresh water daily to New Delhi. The rewards are attractive and, since the direct beneficiary is the capital city itself, there are many benefactors of the project among the high ups in the legislative and the administrative power centres.

The only hitch is that the proposed dam sits on an earthquake zone. Experts say, this area is bound to suffer a severe earthquake during the life time of the dam. And if that happens, millions are likely to be drowned and at least four cities

washed away.

On the one side of the project are the politicians, developers, engineers, sub-contractors and the huge and powerful lobby of those who are likely to profit from the construction of the project. On the other side is knowledge - a rare unanimity of scientific views coming from as diverse sources as the USSR, USA, France and of course India. N D Jayal, Director of the Natural Heritage Cell of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, calls the project "an invitation to disaster". Soviet seismologists and experts, who encouraged New Delhi to go for the project in the first place, are now unanimous in their view that it requires "serious reconsideration". US expert and the president of the International Union of Geophysics testified that the dam's location was one of the most risky from earthquake point of view. On a risk scale of 1 to 36, the Tehri Dam records 36 according to the Paris based International Commission on Large Dams. What it all means is that there are considerable

amount of scientific data and substantial accumulation of expert opinions to make a strong case to reconsider the desirability of this dam. Located at a height of 850 feet in the foothills of the Himalayas, the dam will be a virtual death trap for millions, waiting to be set loose by an earthquake.

There is a lot to be learnt from the Tehri Dam episode. In most developing countries the socalled development lobbies are much stronger than the emergent eco-lobbies. In fact till the other day environmentalists were considered to be nature-freaks unconcerned about and removed from the survival needs of the resource stricken Third World. Now we know better.

Himalayas is a natural heritage, common to mankind. For those in the South Asian region, the health of the Himalayas is naturally a matter concern. Already due to indiscriminate deforestation of the Himalayan range, the flood situation in Bangladesh has worsened. If the Tehri Dam increases the chance of a major earthquake in the Himalayas with its attendant ecological repercussions, then we all need to worry about it.

We urge the Indian authorities to heed the scientific advice and take a second look into feasibility and desirability of this dam. Perhaps a more serious search for an alternative site is called for. No amount of hydro-electric power or the promise of higher acreage of irrigated land justifies gambling with the lives of millions. In such gambles nature always wins.

The Meat Switchover

How much meat does one need on one's daily dish? The eighties have been a rather meat-wary decade, and things tend to draw the starting decades of the next millenium to be madly looking for substitutes of meat. Meat has been roundly denounced by doctors and scientists as a problem item of food. And not many up to date have been found to demur.

Still, an answer to our question couldn't be all physiological. There's an element of culture involved, in however small an amount. The Eskimo must have meat in great quantities — and fatty meat at that - for quite physiological reasons. People living in warmer climates need not eat so much meat. But in the steppes and savannas of the world people eat a lot of carcass-flesh. One reason is shortage of other sources of animal protein — mainly fish in those flat grasslands. The traditions that grew out of this have given birth to a rich meat culture.

Man does not eat only to fill the stomach and kill the hunger. He eats also for the pleasure of it - and there comes the case of culture. The Bengalees have always been great lovers of fish. Their fishy food culture developed over eons of time. Their habitat the alluvial delta was covered by swamps and forests, as such not particularly suitable to pasturing. And it was dotted with ponds and lakes and drained by the mightiest rivers in the world, all filled with countless varieties of delicious fish.

Two decades of Pakistan and the subsequent two decades of independence have seen a massive switching over by the Bengalees of Bangladesh to meat eating. Cultural factors rather than physical and geographical have played a big part in this. Harking to Central Asian or supposedly Islamic connections and looking up to the western way of life have influenced the switch very extensively and profoundly.

We are now being told that this has been a rather unfortunate act of choice. A vegetarian dish is dietically far superior and safer than a non-veg one if only because man - as one among the primate branch of the land mammalia — was not physico-organically cut to be flesh eater. The result of an infatuation for meat dishes can be guessed from a single sentence from a recent report by the Worldwatch Institute. "Saturated fats that accompany concentrated protein in meat and dairy products are associated with most of the diseases of affluence that are among the leading causes of death in industrial countries.

The Worldwatch report, according to the Daily Star of July 15, made another alarming observation. Grazing cattleherds are a positive risk to environment. They blame trodden sands in Turkmenia and Botswana, wilted wildflowers in the Netherlands, forest fires in Costa Rica and declining water supplies in US on the gentle bovine creatures.

The dangerous meat switchover has been one reason why fish resources are being allowed to be depleted without provision of future replenishment. We are fashioning a nice little hell for us to Post-Gulf War Arms Bonanza

The conflict over the future of the US military-industrial complex explains the zigzagging decisions of the Bush administration on the arms control issue, writes William D Hartung, senior research fellow at the World Policy Institute of the New School of Social of Social Research in New York.

the president's recent package of proposals to stem the spread of advanced weaponry spawned by the Gulf War, the to the Middle East, have been major US military contractors routinely followed by the anare painfully aware that there nouncement of yet another can be no return to the halround of US arms sales. cyon days of the Reagan era. This gap between the when all three military serrhetoric of restraint and the vices were making large scale reality of arms-export-bustpurchases of a virtual industry ness-asusual is rooted in an wise list of new aircraft, misongoing political over the fusiles, ships, and armored vehi-

> By 1996, Pentagon's spending on the acquisition of new weapons systems is slated to fall to a full 50 per cent below the levels of 1985, the peak year of the Reagan military

And in an irony which the contractors are keen to exploit politically, many of the weapons systems that were prominently featured in the Gulf War - including the M-1 tank, the F-15 fighter plane. the Apache/helicopter and the

Patriot missile - are being dropped from the US defence budget to clear the way for the development of the next generation of high-tech military

hardware.

Rather than seriously exploring diversification into commercial markets in the face of this domestic defence budget crunch, most US contractors have chosen the path of least resistance, seeking foreign orders to keep their production lines up and running until the next batch of Pentagon production contracts comes around.

This new export push was clearly on display at the Paris Air Show, where US firms pitched their wares with variations on the theme of "how my weapons won the Gulf War." From videos of US aircraft

and missiles devastating Iraqi targets to glossy brochures and fact sheets highlighting the performance of key US systems in Operation Desert Storm, the underlying message was clear: no self-respecting Ministry of Defence can afford not to buy its fair share of this "combat proven" US hardware.

In a new twist, the Department of Defense and the uniformed military services served as virtual partners with industry in promoting the sale of US arms at this year's show. Not only did the Pentagon shoulder the cost of flying a full array of the 'Atreraft of Desert Storm' to Paris, but the pilots who had flown them in the Gulf were brought along as well, to tout the performance of US systems in the war of the benefit of potential customers.

Pentagon officials are clearly not expecting limits on arms transfers to take effect my time soon, and in the interim they are gearing up to offer an unprecedented degree of marketing assistance to US military contractors in the battle to dominate world mar-

This drive for exports is an effort to subsidies and sustain the vastly oversized military establishment that is the legacy of Ronald Reagan's US\$ 2 trillion defence spending binge of the 1980's. If President Bush is serious about restraining the arms trade, he should put his top policy makers to work on an economic strategy for reducing the dependence of key contractors and communities on military spending.

In a promising development, Secretary of State James Baker recently went on record in support of the conversion of military industries to civilian production. In the Soviet Union that is no doubt a worthy objective, but it is time for the Bush team to put together a plan for the demilitarisation of the US economy, involving retraining of workers in defense industry, financial incentives for military firms to enter commercial markets, and the promotion of civilian exports instead of arms sales.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration's approach to date, as evidenced by its proposal to get the Export Import Bank involved in subsidising foreign military sales, is headed squarely in the wrong direction.

Unless George Bush is willing to take concrete steps to curtail the political and economic clout of US military industry and its bureaucratic allies in the Pentagon, his new. tentative steps toward limiting the arms trade are destined to fall victim to the pressures of old fashioned pork barrel poli-

Body Orientation Makes Communication Effective

traditional administrator is different from

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Bush's on-again-off-

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Despite the patriotic fer-

vour and pro-military attitudes

While the State Department

trial complex.

military budget.

Public pledges to pursue

initiatives on this issue.

development administrator in goals, process and behaviour. A traditional administrator is alleged to be non-communicative and non-interactive. A modern administrator is required to be communicative for an effective administrator is an effective communicator. A plethora of activities of an administrator involves communication. In performing the role of a leader, negotiator, trainer, supervisor, bargainer, interviewer, and coordinator, an administrator has to communicate with diverse groups of people. According to a research survey, an administrator spends 52% of his time in verbal and non-verbal communication (NVC) in day-today transactions.

Body is the most reliable source of messages and mean ings. Administrators communicate much of their feelings. reactions, attitudes through what is called 'body language' or non-verbal communication. These are expressed uncon

sciously or consciously. Conscious use of body language is the result of body orientation. This orientation is acquired through training, personal education or meticulous observation. An administrator having received body orientation is able to make his communication effective, attractive, and persuasive. In fact, body orientation promotes the level of his interpersonal competence. Whether there is any genetic component of interpersonal competence is yet to be known. It is however a proven fact that an administrator can enhance his interpersonal competence by acquiring verbal and non-verbal skills. A body orientation prevents redundant use of body and also enriches communication through conscious use of bodily parts. In non-verbal communication process, body includes head, eyes, eye brows, eye-lids, ears, lips, hands, fingers, chest, shoulders and legs. Each body component functions individually in the communication process. In order that verbal communication be effec-

by Syed Naquib Muslim

tive and attractive it has to be combined with bodily communication or NVC whose role is complementary. Facial expressions, gestures and postures are made consciously or unconsciously to reinforce the verbal behaviour of the admin-

A modern administrator needs to listen actively to what his elient is saying. Listeneradministrators who do not look at the client-speakers are regarded as rude, indifferent and disinterested. Using eyes for gaze is an NV reinforcer. If eye-contact is not maintained mutually, the client-speaker and the administrator-listener both feel ignored and isolated. A stone-faced administrator is careless in the use of eyes and therefore misses cues that emanate from client's gestures and vocal expressions. Eyecontact creates an "I-am-withyou" feeling in the communication partners.

The face is the richest source of cues to someone's feelings, motives, reactions

and intentions. Facial expressions reflect emotions like fear, disgust, shock, anger, happiness, sadness, surprise, worry etc. An administrator has to be vigilant if he wishes to receive the complete and real message from the speaking client. An individual indicates satisfaction or happiness by the facial cue of smile. Face of a hired witness giving false evidence turns red; he frequently scratches his head. gazes at the floor with his head lowered. Lips of a tutored witness in a court-room environment tends to quiver. A presiding officer engaged in judicial proceedings has to take into account these nonverbal signals.

Hand and finger movements are also clue to someone's feelings and behavioural pattern. Forward head-shaking or nodding indicates approval or agreement. A speaker-client feels encouraged at the nodding of the listener-administrator. A positive nodding is an effective reinforcer. An admin-

istrator indicating a forefinger during conversation or public speaking reflects his critical parent ego and authoritative behaviour. A balanced movement of hands and chest can make an administrator's oral presentation lively, natural and palatable. Legs and feet also reflect emotional expressions as well as mental make-up, signs of tension generally appear in the lower parts of the body. A speaker frequently moving his legs and feet indicates that he is nervous and tense. According to behavioural scientists, a negotiator or a diplomat sitting during a faceto-face dialogue with his legs crossed gives the impression of an arrogant and autocratic behaviour. A friendly, positive and interested administrator sits naturally relaxed without keeping his legs crossed. Humility, courteousness are both Islamic and Christian virtues which are championed by public administration theorists and practitioners of today. These virtues can be demon-

strated non-verbally through

conscious positioning of legs

and feet while sitting and standing

Feedback is an essential loop in the chain of communication. An administrator can both provide and receive feedback verbally and non-verbally. Non-verbal feedback is provided by bodily gestures and postures. Recognition is a positive feedback that can be provided by patting on others' shoulders or by posing a smile on the face or by shaking hands without any verbal ex-

In his struggle for achieving excellence, an administrator must combine body orientation with training and education on other areas. A body orientation can truly make him socially competent and important. Training institutes providing administrative and diplomatic training should therefore incorporate non-verbal communication or body language as a component of course curricu-

The writer is a Deputy Director, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, Savar, Dhaka.

Rebellion Mounts in New Zealand Government

David Robie writes from Auckland

Until recently New Zealand was rated one to the world's most peaceful and socially

Zealand's mave-Maori Affairs Minister, Winston Peters, has defied pressure on him to resign as conflict deepens in the country over the conservative government's increasingly unpopular economic policies.

Peters, the most outspoken cabinet critic, has refused to remain silent as Prime Minister Jim Bolger's beleaguered government prepares for its first budget. He has rejected a call from Maori Council chairman Sir Graham Latimer, that he should be dumped from his portfolio.

Finance Minister Ruth Richardson, the country's most unpopular politician, is expected to bring in a harsh budget on July 30 introducing a new superannuation scheme with drastic cutbacks and substantial pruning of the state-funded health system.

Peters said on television that the economy had failed according to two International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicators - unemployment (which continues to soar) and the sharemarket. Bolger retorted that the rebel minister had virtually given him an open invitation to dismiss him.

Brushing the furore aside, Peters pledged that in spite of the tough economic climate the budget would usher in his controversial Ka Awatea — "New Day" - programme for Maori developmnent, unscathed by cuts.

As the unpopularity of the conservative National govern-

progressive countries. That changed when first a Labour government, than a conservative one, chose to meet an economic crisis with monetarist solutions. The "user-pays" and free market policies appear to have created an alarming social crisis. The new government, attacked by dissidents and the target of huge street protests, is looking increasingly unstable. Upheaval of the right party might be formed.



ment grows, Bolger and his senior colleagues are becoming

increasingly irritated by the party's parliamentary dissidents and rumours that a rebel

Among the dissidents is former prime minister Robert Muldoon, who has called for an economic policy with a 'human face'. He has bitterly attacked some of his government's policies - such as trying to eliminmate the internal deficit during a recession - as "extremely foolish", and has hinted that he may vote against the budget over the pension

Although it is unlikely that Muldoon would abandon the National Party, he still holds in flounce and his condemnation of the government has encouraged other back bench rebels to speak out.

Muldoon urged the "thousands of ordinary members' of the National Party to recover their party from the influence of the "Treasury and those extremist pressure groups".

The man who dominated New Zealand politics for a decade from the mid-1970s, Muldoon has now championed pensioners. They make up a

sixth of New Zealand's 3.4 million population and have formed a powerful lobby group that troubles the government.

Bolger's choice with his budget is to alienate the pensioners or heed his economic advisers who say that unless he allows them to prune pensions another 30.000 people with be added to the already staggering total (for New Zealand) of 300,000 unemployed.

Pensioners have taken to the streets to demonstrate against a government which was elected by a majority of 28 in the 97-seat parliament on a "decent society" platform. In April tens of thousands of citizens took to the streets to protest against drastic welfare cuts and the employment Contracts act which strips trade unions of their traditional role in labour relations.

Unprecedented scenes of poverty have emerged in this country which exports food to the world: food banks have been set up for the poor, and

media personalities gambol . about demonstrating how they could not live on welfare benefits. Throughout the country there is a sense of rising anger.

One of the country's most perceptive political commentators, Bruce Jesson, has warned: "This looks to be a very unstable government - as unstable as the Labour government it replaced and for the same reason. The policies it is pursuing do not represent a consensus of opinion within the National Party, but amount to a coup by a New Right group within the government."

The New Right is probably the smallest faction in the National caucus, and it is not linked to intellectual direction: rather, suggests Jesson, six years of the Labour government's free market reforms have proved self-justifying."

Influential people who believe in Keynesian policies and the welfare state have been marginalised, the unions weakened and the public service make imitiative of busi-

In many respects it is the five or so rebel backbench National MPs who are providing a more effective opposition than the Labout party. One of them, Gilbert Myles, has in recent weeks kept up a series of attacks on his government: "I cannot understand why we have homeless when we have empty homes all around us." - GEMINI NEWS

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

BCCI and after

Sir, Much has been written regarding the BCCI closure in Bangladesh. True that BCCI was closed in UK and other European and South East Asian countries, but was this all necessary for us to do? To the best of our knowledge Bangladesh is not a free currency zone. All Foreign Exchange transactions are controlled and monitored by Bangladesh Bank. Hence the question of flight of capital, as in the case of free currency area, does not arise. And certainly Taka currency deposits would not be transferred out of

Bangladesh. It was seen during the last

cyclone in Chittagong that the government acted promptly in sanctioning amounts of loan and credit to the industries affected in the Export Processing Zone. By the same token, a calamity has befallen the export clients of BCCI but the government is neither extending any ad-hoc financial help to the affected export units of the BCCI nor is making any serious effort to collect their export bills, retire their import documents so that these units could keep functioning.

There belatedby came the announcement to open an account with Agrani Bank. How could it require a long time of

10 days to arrive at such a decision? Then again, why Agrant Bank and not the BCCI itself to open a window at the Bangladesh Bank or elsewhere at least to receive the export documents if not for transaction of any other business? If such a crisis as that of a bank's closure affecting the business. commerce and lives of individuals find such not so responsible reaction from the administration, one starts wondering whether the people's other expectations are going to be fulfilled at all!

M. Hussain Motifheel C/A, Dhaka.

Income tax on dividend

Sir, My daughter got interested in dividend income on shares at the sight of the former president receiving dividend from a BCIC enterprise, as shown on BTV.

It appears from the recent Budget that a 10% deduction will be effective from income on dividend. But the Finance Minister continued to stress poor domestic savings while presenting the budget in the same utterances as had been made by his predecessors starting from the Pakistani days. Under the backdrop should it not be appropriate not to deduct income tax from dividend income of small amounts.

My daughter's dividend income of Tk 50 will cause to pay Tk 5.00 as income tax. Stlly isn't it?

Sadik Alee Maghbazar, Dhaka.

Judicial enquiry

Sir, Vide news item published in the press, it is understood that the Attorney General and Chief Prosecution Counsel in the corruption case

against the former President apologised for hurting anyone by the "false and malicious report" published July 4 by a leading Bengali daily stating that the former told the accused President Ershad "You bloody, shut up". The Attorney General had however published a rejoinder on the following day, it is reported.

Two questions: Whether the Attorney General uttered such words as appeared in the newspaper ? And if he didn't, why then he should tender an unqualified apology even in the face of threat or pressure?

The matter needs judicial enquiry and clarification.

Meanwhile, the Article 35 (5) of the national Constitution states that "no person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment" while the Code of Criminal Procedure under Section 342

(I) (3) of 1898 protecting the

human rights states that "the accused is to explain any circumstances against him at any stage of enquiry or trial may be taken into consideration by the Court."

Assistant Professor, Bangladesh Agricultural Institute, Dhaka-1207.

M Zahidul Haque

Name and beyond

Str. Richard Nixon in a recent article 'Don't Let Soviets Escape the Moment of Truth' used the term 'Bangladesh' as a synonym for a poverty stricken country as he says The Soviet Union is no nucleararmed Bangladesh.' Does this make the expression 'bottomless basket,' coined earlier by Henry Kissinger to describe Bangladesh, now superfluous?

Syed Badrul Haque Lalmatia, Dhaka