

# Non-aligned Seek their Place in New World Order

Michael Jansen writes from Nicosia

**T**HE Non-aligned movement made perhaps its most effective attempt in May to meet the many challenges brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the United States-dominated "new world order".

Fearing they could become victims of this unipolar order, as have Iraq and Libya, the Non-aligned movement (NAM) is earnestly trying to reorganise its leadership and map out strategies that will allow it to play a meaningful role in world affairs.

A ministerial meeting in Accra in September 1991 made a brave beginning, and a later foreign ministers' meeting in Cyprus advanced the restructuring process.

Having failed at the Belgrade summit in 1989 to launch the reforms most members had long agreed were needed, Non-aligned members who met in Bali recently now hope that "going back to Indonesia" — where the idea of an Asian-African bloc was born in 1955 — might lead to a regeneration of NAM that will carry it through this critical period.

At the Bali meeting, attended by 70 countries, recommendations were made and the groundwork prepared for NAM's critical Jakarta summit in September.

Guatemala and Papua New Guinea were admitted as members, swelling the membership to 104. Cambodia's membership was reactivated after 13 years, China was admitted as an observer and Germany as a guest (joining Finland, Greece, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, among others).

Taking as its precedent the international community's policy toward the break-up of the Soviet Union, NAM also decided that Serbia-Montenegro should be considered

The Non-aligned movement, which represents two-thirds of the UN's membership, is trying to come to terms with the US-dominated new world order. Despite facing an ideological void in the post-Cold War world, its members recently confirmed their intention to keep NAM going but agreed to restructure the movement's leadership. As Non-aligned countries prepare for their ninth summit in Jakarta, reports Gemini News Service, a more realistic approach to world politics might be seen.



FOUNDING FATHERS  
JAWAHARAL NEHRU (India) GAMAL ABDEL NASSER (Egypt) JOSIP BROZ TITO (Yugoslavia)

the successor to the former Yugoslav federation. Serbia-Montenegro agreed not to object if other members of the former federation, Croatia and Slovenia (and eventually Bosnia-Herzegovina) should make formal application for membership at Jakarta.

Since NAM's main priorities are no longer decolonisation and apartheid, the movement resolved to adopt its own positions on disarmament, nuclear proliferation, the environment, human rights and democratisation — issues on which NAM members have serious differences with the

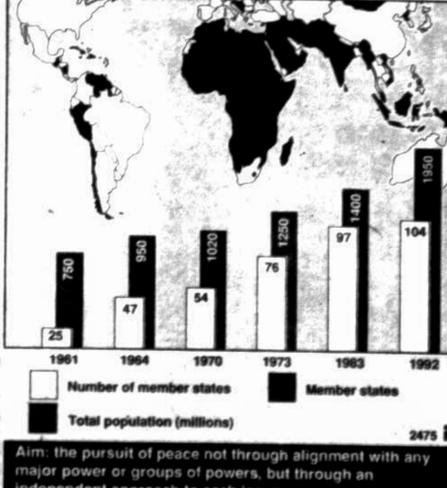
West. NAM has, however, decided that it should not adopt a confrontational approach to the US-dominated West but should seek to resolve differences by negotiation.

This would seem to mean that the small confrontational group within NAM (Cuba, Iraq, Libya) has decided to go with the consensus of the two dominant groups of the pro-Westerners (Egypt, Indonesia and Cyprus) and the increasingly assertive independents (India, Yemen, Palestine, Algeria and Zimbabwe).

At Bali this consensus on a non-confrontational approach was respected by Iraq and

## The Non-aligned Movement

Non-aligned movement was conceived at Afro-Asian conference in Bandung, Indonesia, 1955. 29 nations attended. First summit was in Belgrade, 1961. Number of full members reached 104 when Guatemala and Papua New Guinea were admitted.



Aim: the pursuit of peace not through alignment with any major power or groups of powers, but through an independent approach to each issue...

Libya. The two countries brought up the United Nations sanctions against them but did not press for outright condemnation or a formal NAM response.

In order that NAM might assume its role as coordinator of two-thirds of the UN's membership, the movement advocates a restructuring of the Security Council by expanding its permanent membership to include Japan and Germany and three Non-aligned countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

NAM would also like to revive the General Assembly to offset the domination of the Security Council. This could be

"interim period" between the old bipolar world and, potentially, a multipolar ordering of international relationships.

Since the 1984 assassination of the last effective chairperson of NAM, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the movement has drifted from crisis to crisis without taking positions or action.

In order to end this drift and ensure that NAM has someone strong at the helm, the committee has suggested that the chairperson should have "back-up," either from a European Community style "troika" (made up of past and future NAM leaders) or a wider consultative group consisting of four members each from Asia and Africa, two from Latin America and one from Europe.

In the past NAM has had three major shortcomings: a large and diverse membership, a lack of discipline — with members accepting a NAM ruling and then taking an opposing stand in other forums — and a need for decisions to be taken by consensus.

On membership, recommendations were made that the movement review qualifications for different participants and formalise application procedures.

This could be the first step towards a review of NAM's entire membership, weeding out those that do not adhere to the movement's policy guidelines, imposing a measure of discipline on members.

Diplomats who have attended recent meetings say that the movement must return to its roots, back to the moral practice of "independent judgment" propounded by Jawaharal Nehru and the practical policy of collective self-protection advocated by Marshal Tito. — GEMINI NEWS

MICHAEL JANSEN is a freelance journalist based in Nicosia.

## JUTE is going high fashion

The National Institute of Fashion Technology is already using jute fabrics in new fashion dresses, a move that it hopes will be trend-setting.

India's jute industry is in dire need to set trends for itself as well. Jute exporters are in the dumps because of falling demands for packaging material, the drought situation in Bengal State and other regions and increasing competition from Bangladesh.

The industry is also facing the doldrums because of a sudden decline in the volume of trade with the former Soviet Union and East European countries.

Now jute exponents are selling the "golden fibre" as environment-friendly — as an alternative to non-biodegradable plastics. Indian researchers say jute can be used as well for packing tea, fruits, textiles and other items.

## Golden Jute Walks High-fashion Ramp

The country is particularly eyeing the textile potentials of jute. India exports jute yarn to the European Community but its share of the market went down from 39 per cent in 1983 to 21 per cent in 1987.

Apart from yarn, India exports other jute products like canvas, tarpaulin, cotton webbing and other items.

"Our aim is to change the image of jute from a mere packaging material into a versatile fibre which can meet the tastes and preferences of individual consumers," says a senior official.

"We will now have to produce value-added diversified products," says one industry analyst. "So a national programme is being evolved which will lay emphasis on growing of new types of up-

## Prakash Chandra writes from New Delhi

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graded jute seeds and better quality products."

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has worked out a national programme to step up jute production, devise a diversification programme and help find new markets.

According to a UNDP report, the Indian jute industry has gradually lost its strength in the export market largely due to competition from new synthetic packaging material. Global concern over the adverse environmental effects of these synthetic materials,

however, has created potential for revitalising the jute industry.

India hopes to raise jute exports from today's 3,000 million rupees (US\$ 107 million) to 10,000 million rupees (US\$357 million) by 1996-97. Jute production in 1990-91 was around 1.4 million metric tons. The total annual value of manufactured jute products was estimated at 21,450 million rupees (US\$766 million).

The industry employs some 250,000 workers in 70 mills, of which 56 are located in a round Calcutta. The jute industry is virtually in the private sector as only 18 per cent of total production is in government-owned mills. Thus, observers say the industry is capable of responding to new initiatives.

UNDP will support the production of diverse new value-

## added jute products for domestic and international marketing.

Through the creation of National Centre for Jute Diversification, with offices in Calcutta and New Delhi, the programme will provide a total management system which will transfer technology from research and development to private sector production.

International experts from the private sector will provide market research, identify new product lines, and design marketing and promotional strategies. Private sector experts will be recruited in the areas of management, market research, product development, and promotion.

UNDP contribution for the five-year project is US\$23 million. Funds will provide consultants, and national and international private sector experts. Training and equipment for the research and development of pilot products will also be provided.

"We are trying our best to remove bureaucratic hurdles," says LB Saptarishi, a UNDP consultant. "Initiation of fresh

and innovative ideas is the need of the hour."

Observers believe the image of jute will improve as a result of a series of research and development works to be undertaken by the National Jute Development Programme. Under the programme, entrepreneurs will be provided skills training and facilities, including export promotions and marketing.

The most important part of the programme is the UNDP-supported National Centre for Jute Diversification. It will promote jute in the international market as well as conduct market surveys and devise marketing strategies.

Another aim is to bring about foreign collaboration, equity participation and market tie-ups between local entrepreneurs and foreign companies.

The services of leading designers, for example, will be obtained. Officials say there will be increased cooperation between private and government jute research units. There will be increasing emphasis on the employment of women in the manufacture of diversified jute products.

— Depthnews Asia

## To the Editor...

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.

### River erosion: newsworthiness

Sir, I am a regular subscriber of your esteemed daily and my opinion is that this is the best local English daily I have come across since I started reading English newspapers after matriculating in 1949. Your commentary on important matters, interviews with important personalities, articles of guest writers, to mention a few, are commendable. Today I am writing to make a humble suggestion on your discretion of placement of news on front page. In the issue of 10th August, a small news under the heading 'Erosion forces 6500 homeless in fortyeight hours' appeared at page 11 of your paper. This is no doubt a news from one of the 64 districts but is it not important enough in the socio-economic perspective of Bangladesh to get a place in the front page and bold headline? According to the news, two hundred fifty dwelling houses have been washed away rendering at least the same number of families homeless. If an earth quake or a cyclone had brought this calamity, then many of the newspapers would have put it in the front page with broad headlines.

River erosion is not a lesser natural calamity than flood or cyclone in Bangladesh. This is perhaps the main reason for increasing the floating population in the cities of Bangladesh and consequently increasing the beggars problem. Needs of rehabilitation of these homeless families are no less than the needs of rehabilitation of flood or cyclone affected people of this country. A national news paper must draw the attention of the 'managers' of this coun-

try to this socio-economic problem. Should we not have a Ministry of Rivers Erosion to handle this chronic human misery?

Ghulam Kabir  
Juashara, Dhaka.

### Determinism

Sir, Man is a social being. He cannot live alone. As a social being he is to maintain relations with other people. And to maintain that, he is to formulate policies.

Relations can be broadly categorized as friendly relations and hostile relations. In course of events, however, friendly relations may turn hostile and the vice versa.

Perhaps, there is no man in the world without any enemy or any friend. Success in one's life lies in the minimization of the number of enemies and maximization of the number of friends.

### An appeal

Sir, I am a student of Alem second year, general section, of Comilla Aliah Madrasa. At present, it has become impossible for me to continue my studies owing to financial insolvency. My father somehow maintained our family by teaching in a Maktab, doing the duties of an Imam at a mosque and by the income from a small plot of land. But when he was suddenly attacked with tuberculosis, we failed to give him proper treatment even by mortgaging the lands and then selling the same. My father died in 1985, leaving behind my mother, four brothers and two sisters.

Now, we are barely maintaining our existence with the financial help of the local people. One of my younger brothers works in the neighbour's farm. We could not afford his study. Another brother reads in class five at the Thiraser Madrasa under Chadina. The youngest brother and two sisters are living with my mother. The price of the daily necessities is so high that it is very difficult for us to keep body and soul together. As there is no particular income in the family, it is almost impossible to continue my study with the financial help of the local people only.

I therefore, pray to all and the authority for help so that I can prosecute my study and our family sees better days.

Md Amir Hossain  
Islamia Aliah Madrasa, Comilla

### rigorously substantiates the theory of determinism underlying the course of, unfolding events shaping our relationships with others.

Md Abdur Rouf  
International Relations Department, DU

## OPINION

### "No One Can Forbid Us the Future"

We are regular readers of The Daily Star and we take deep interest in the daily. In the 11th July issue of The Daily Star, an article captioned "No one can forbid us the future" by Naheed Kamal was published in the children's forum the Rising Stars. We take particular note of the article.

The article advocates freedom of choice and action for children and youths. However, since the article has been printed in the Rising Stars page, it is assumed that the message in the article is meant for children of various groups — from small children to youths.

We are a family in which every adult member of any gender holds liberal views about morals, taboos, rules and laws and the children in the family are groomed to grow up into responsible members of the modern society in which we live. Like many families who are pragmatic about life and who do not believe in religious dogmas and doctrines, we are opposed to upsetting the applecart in the name of ill-judged women's lib.

Well, any well-meaning, reasonable human being would not regard it judicious to give small children freedom to choose and act in anything including morals. The points is: the small children are not yet prepared to face the challenges of life; they are being prepared to understand the realities of life and how to make choice in his or her own interest as well as in the interest of the society which seeks to maintain discipline in the vast mosaic of relationships among its members.

A human being is neither an angel nor a Satan. Humans are

born with good and bad traits in their character. When bad traits become powerful in most humans in the society, injustice and oppression reign in society. When good traits in the humans predominate, humans seek to practise and promote the values of justice and fairplay in society.

Doubtless, when small children are helped by parents, educational institutions and other enlightened groups to develop their faculty of reasoning, their power of distinguishing between right and wrong, they are free to make their decisions. Importantly, their decisions affect the society favourably or adversely. In fact, the children can enjoy their freedom of action when they are not guided by emotions alone. Freedom is more meaningful when emotions are harmonised with reason.

True, in a male-dominated world women are victims of harassment, oppressions and various forms of discrimination — familial, social, political, economical, educational. Such a disgraceful state of affairs has been challenged by woman leaders worldwide. Males have been increasingly partners in this movement. The imbalance in man-woman relationship is being redressed.

There was a time when in our society female children did not go to schools or colleges. Now girls are largely exposed to the light of education. The social and religious prejudices are falling apart. More and more women are entering government offices, business, commerce, industries, legal profession, media, medical profession, education and so on.

All the above, perhaps, less

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— Depthnews Asia

Let's have the gallery

A top-ranking minister has lamented the fact that the nation didn't have a national art gallery even after 20 years. We do not have a national theatre either — the Osmani Memorial Hall shouldn't be advisedly be confused as one. It may take Shilpakala Academy's organising a workshop on theatre to elicit a similar lament from Mr Saifur Rahman concerning the absence of the theatre.

We welcome the positive aspects in Mr Rahman's observations at the inauguration at Shilpakala of a month-long workshop on painting Saturday. In point of fact Ershad, the autocrat, had, a couple of years back, allocated some 40 million Taka to build a national art gallery. Mr Saifur Rahman's Saturday speech at the Shilpakala Academy in effect says, courage, what he had only promised, we shall deliver. Perhaps it will be somewhat premature to feel thankful for such assurances have a way of running and losing its way into sand deserts.

While we indeed haven't cared to build for the nation a gallery worth the pride we take in our culture, it is not true that sporadic public and private initiatives haven't been taken to encourage fine arts by attempts at patronising them. Our National Museum, the Shilpakala Academy itself and the Institute of Arts and Crafts of Dhaka University have been collecting and preserving paintings and sculptures for years. But there never was any consistent policy guiding it and the sum of all such efforts fell far short of what was needed.

There have as well been some private initiatives at setting up art galleries which, of necessity, have more to be in the nature of art dealers' showrooms displaying and trading in objects of art and craft and assorted bric-a-brac — sometimes quite vulgar. These do have their uses specially in sustaining the up and coming painter and more importantly in the good work of making common run of people art conscious. The latest in this line has been a mighty heave promising in its months of existence a big change for better in the art situation of the country — specially in terms of quality and ensuring price worth that. Even that big stride by Mr Faiz Ahmed, called the Shilpangan, can at best be a very good pace-setter in the matter of making society art-interested and can hardly come to do what a national gallery charged with collecting and preserving and displaying the nation's entire storehouse of visual and plastic arts can do.

Only when such effective measures are there for involving the masses in the movements of art can the questions of alienation of the arts from the people be taken up meaningfully.

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