For an Effective NAM

Just as the world has changed, so must NAM But the question is, can it? The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that began as a reaction against the ideological rivalry between the United States and the former Soviet Union will now have to find a new set of objectives for itself. The search for alternative goals is not really new. It started in 1973 at Algiers when the group adopted the resolution to work for a new international economic order (NIEO). Echoes of the same demand are now reverberating ever louder from the four corners of the NAM Summit. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia herself made the same plea in her address to the plenary on Tuesday. NAM will have to strengthen its economic agenda to become a meaningful body for all its members.

To put it bluntly, NAM has lost its original political relevance. The appeal for being nonaligned, apart from raising the question nonaligned against whom, really evokes no interest. In fact there is a new urge for forming alliances for economic and cultural co-operation - more so the former of course. It is in these radically changed circumstances that the 10th Summit is being held at the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. The summit will have to find a new role for what is now, and has been ever since it was constituted, the biggest group of countries outside the United Nations and its family of organisations. Two questions will have to be frankly addressed by the participating countries. First, can NAM change and adopt a new set of policy objectives? Second, if it can and does change, does the movement have the power, the will and, finally, the mechanism to implement those changes? It is in the last aspect that makes us most sceptical. Going back to the Algiers Summit in 1973, following the adoption of the resolution on the NIEO, tremendous hopes were raised, especially among the Third World countries, that finally the might of such a large number of countries will be put together to bring about justice in international economy, especially in trade.

But the fact is indisputable that nothing really came out of it all except volumes of papers and endless speeches. This happened primarily because the NAM had no mechanism to implement its resolutions. There was also the factor that much of the inaction within NAM resulted from subtle ideological divide that existed within NAM members themselves. It is our hope now that such divisions have disappeared and that it will be a more united NAM that will pursue the new goals which will be adopted in Jakarta.

It is our hope that all member countries will focus sufficient attention on setting up a proper mechanism so that NAM resolutions are given some sort of effect in terms of implementation. In this regard a close coordination with the Group of 77, which is basically a group of developing countries within the United Nations - but whose membership in most cases overlap with that of the NAM - should be established. Talk of a permanent secretariat for NAM has never materialised due to scarcity of funds. That absence itself contributed to NAM's ineffectiveness. For the sake of convenience, as because all NAM members have representation at the UN headquarters in New York, NAM used to operate out of New York, with the country that became chairman acting as the coordinator. Time has come for the NAM members to think of a secretariat of its own, keeping a lid on the cost factor of course.

It is our hope that Bangladesh, led by our Prime Minister, can play an effective role in pushing the NAM Summit in the direction indicated above. It is not too late yet for our delegation to take new initiatives in setting up follow-up mechanism for NAM resolutions and also to push for the establishment of a permanent secretariat. These two things are inseparably linked and, as experience shows, essential for making this large global body effective.

Bringing an End to Piracy

Security of life and property on river and sea routes was never the administration's strong point. Recently, with the rising incidence of piracy -specially off the south coast - waterways along the coast of the Bay of Bengal have become fraught with particular risks. The risks concern mostly fishermen - vessels carrying goods not excluded — who return after deep-sea fishing. As many as 25 cases of dacoity on fishing boats and trawlers only in a fortnight, by any standard, should be considered a grave situation. For months now organised gangs of pirates have been busy swooping on the trawlers on way to fish delivery centres and making good their escapes with large booty worth millions of Taka. In the process, fishermen sustain serious injuries and even get killed

While the piracy goes unabated, the authority concerned has been turning a blind eye to this crime. A vernacular daily reported recently that fishermen have been forced to flee the coastal areas due to the increasing threats from the pirates. In the absence of any effective patrol by the river police, coast guards or the navy, the pirates have been able to set their own rules over the watery expanse. In rare cases they miss their targets and still rarer are the cases when they are caught in their act by the law enforcing agencies.

The pirates' attacks on fishing trawlers have already started taking their toll on the catch of sea fish. Panic-stricken fishermen feel constrained and a substantial decline in their total annual catch will be the natural consequence. Marine fisheries, although a recently developed economic enterprise, has been handsomely contributing to the national exchequer. Frozen food, mostly sea fish, has been fetching around 500 crore Taka annually for some years now. This year the sea fish's share in the foreign exchange earning is expected to fall slightly. Confronted by a host of natural hazards, fishermen are only too illequipped to match the challenge thrown to them by the pirates armed with sophisticated weapons.

Admittedly, the scope for exploitation of marine resources is far wider than so far has been done in the area. High incidence of piracy is surely going to be a positive disincentive to the expansion of areas in sea-resource extraction. More, coupled with the uncertainties due to natural causes, the attacks on trawlers make the export of sea fish still more uncertain leading to cancellation of contracts by the foreign importers. If such things continue to occur, it will be disastrous for the country's economy. Necessary measures should immediately be taken up to establish the rule of law in coastal areas and sea waters.

Prospects in the Midst of Asian Growth Miracle

HERE are only five jobseekers for every eight job vacancies in Japan. The average wage rate in Stngapore has gone up to 1000 dollars per month. Hence the labour intensive factories from the island are moving out to locations in Indonesia where labour cost compared to Stngapore is sixty per cent less. Similar situations of too few seekers for too many job also prevail in South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong - the newly industrialising economies of

WORKING ABROAD

As a consequence, labour in other countries have become more mobile. Legally or otherwise, thousands of job seekers converge on these newly indistrialising countries as well as Japan from else where within the continent including Bangladesh. It is estimated or it might be a guesswork as well, that around half a million foreign workers are now employed in Japan and one-fifth of them are from Bangladesh.

That means around one lakh of our compatriots. mostly very young adults in their twenties or at best early thirties, all male, are working mostly as unskilled workers in construction and in industries where the dirt and the fume make the work quite unattractive to the locals. The figure of one lakh Bangladeshi workers in Japan might be exaggerated but there is no denying that the number is substantial. This is borne out by the number of such young people transiting through Bangkok, in-between Dhaka and Tokyo, almost everyday of the week. Such labour flows to Scoul has also emerged recently. Even the women workers from Bangladesh are also not far

behind and Taiwan is yet another destination for Bengali workers. Recently in Hong Kong. I met a group of women. all from Dhaka, working in a garment factory of Taiwan. This is indeed remarkable.

Job Opportunities

Bangladeshi workers, due to conditions back home, are prepared to work at relatively low wages so much so that, I was told, even the workers from other South Asian countries are not prepared to accept such remunerations. At the same time, the Asian growth miracle has opened up millions of job opportunities particularly in East Asia. Thus somehow set your foot on the soils of the land where the markets are booming from economic growth and the tobs are ready - waiting to be sought. To the basically unskilled workers of our country. three or four years of hard work, inspite of the relatively low wages, would yield a hand some return: a bundle of solid hard currency cash, good enough to buy a tiny piece of land or build a very modest house back home. More important, however, is the golden possibility to create the family savings, perhaps for the first time, and simultaneously meet the urgent needs of the family in terms of current consump-

These young people should be the most admired persons of our country. They believe in hard work. They are convinced of the fact that life is a struggle but one must strive to the best of his or her ability; and. where there is a will, there is a way. They are so much unlike the Chandawallahs and the Mastan gangs spreading terror on the streets of Dhaka

Bangladeshis working abroad often, under tremendous hardships, constitute the silver lining in the midst of the huge could darkening the future of Bangladesh. We must render all possible support to these people desperately trying to go abroad for work, practically any work at all.

A Patriot

An officer at the immigration told me, "I see everyday how desperately these young people are trying to get out of the country; what else they can do - I try my best to get them through by all means " I consider that officer to be the

tional Labour Organisation. the largest group of workers abroad is the 12 million strong Mexican workers in the United States. That is the sort of figure constituting not a drop in the ocean but a downpour on the vast ocean of unemployment. Can we replicate the Mexican experience?

The possibility of workers not returning home but settling down permanently is the real danger perceived by the labour employing countries of the Asia-Pacific region. It is the danger of creating the existence of a minority group in the otherwise homogeneous population of, for example,

WINDOW ON ASIA **Shahed Latif**

greatest patriot of the nation today. Unfortunately, he is the exception rather than the rule. Our Missions abroad must consider it to be their foremost duty to assist the workers abroad; not the other way round that they must crave for the indulgence of the diplo-

It is however true that legally or illegally there is a limit to the number of Bangladeshis who could be employed in the booming economies of East and South-east Asia. Perhaps a maximum of half a million of such youngsters may find jobs - which, in absolute terms, is a large number but given the massive size of the unemployed population, it is a drop in the ocean.

According to the recently published First Annual World Labour Report of the Interna

Japan. Obviously the ethnic mix-up is not a tolerable situation if it can be avoided. In fact the idea of foreign workers is a very recent development and there are no established tradition of such employment except at the trading posts (of very few numbers) during the

Basic Condition

colonial times.

Like in any new, pioneering venture. Government must endeavour to establish with the countries abroad as well as the job-seekers back home that the basic condition must be to work for five years at the most in any one country. The labour employing countries must be convinced that the intention is not immigration on a permanent basis but facilitating the employment of guest workers

purely on a temporary basis for a definite period of time not exceeding five years. It is like the Turkish guest workers employed by the German industries and mining enterprises This is the first condition to be fulfilled.

The next step will be to enable the planned absorption of labour in the particular economic sectors which are suffering from shortage of labour. The first such case that come to mind is agriculture in Malaysia where excellent paddy lands have degenerated into natural swamps because nobody is interested to grow paddy any longer. The farmers have got better paid jobs in the nearby factories. Likewise, the plantation sector of Malaysia can be expanded manifold provided there are plenty of labourers available to develop first and then maintain the plantations. Mechanization is an afternative but it has its limits as well. Basically, paddy or tropical plantation agriculture has continued to remain highly labour intensive.

A similar, if not a greater, degree of scarcity of labour affects the agriculture in the Northern Territories of Australia. The entire area, few times the size of Bangladesh, is a vast tropical wilderness where there are more crocodiles than human beings. The basically European settlers of the continent prefer the cooler climate along the eastern coasts leaving practically barren and largely unexploited the tremendous agriculture potential of the northern territories. Similarly Indonesia abounds with hundreds of islands empty of human beings The total land area of such islands will again be few times the size of Bangladesh.

Three Destinations

Thus there are three destinations within the Asia-Pacific region where tropical agriculture on a fairly large scale can flourish provided the critical labour constraint is removed. If a regional programme is taken up through sincere inter-country initiatives, then few million Bangladeshis would find employment abroad as guest workers.

In the world today, there is surplus capital. Japan can finance the development of the plantations which in turn would tremendously boost the demand for farming as well as agro-processing machineries and equipment. The recessionridden economy of Australia would receive a shot in the arm. The Malaysian agriculture will witness a regeneration restoring the balance between agriculture and manufacturing sectors. In case of Indonesia. the transmigration programme away from Java to the outer islands should be boosted since the Javanese would automatically see the opportunities opened up by the expanding plantation economy of the outer islands.

Above all, our gain could be - atleast a few million of us working abroad. The situation would then be close to the Mexican experience of working outside the Mexican territories yet remaining Mexican.

I am sure, the question that is lurking behind in the minds of the readers is the feasibility of the proposal because of the need for very strong intercountry cooperation. Let us try it out first on a small scale. Then only we will know the

Struggle in Africa to See Who Will Rule the Airwaves

Ibrahima Fall, a Senegalese journalist with Sud Hebdo from Dakar

FRICA'S attempts to renew its political sys- ★ tems — through promotion of human rights, respect for pluralism and en couragement of people with new and creative ideas — is beginning to affect the continent's predominantly stateowned radio networks.

The potential impact on development is enormous, because surveys have shown that more than 80 per cent of the population has access to a radio, making it easily the cheapest and most effective means of communication on the continent.

The justification for 30 years of suffocating administrative and political control over the electronic media has been the need to build nations within often artificial national boundaries.

But people who have been forgotten by years of mal-development, and who no longer wish to be led by autocrats, are waking up. One change has been an explosion of independent newspapers and increased freedom for the journalists who work for them - a development which has further discredited governmentowned radio services.

The struggle for pluralism will be difficult: Ministers of Information remain in political and editorial control, and many countries lack laws allowing private initiatives. But the idea that radio can with-

stand the liberalisation which is transforming the state and the independent press looks increasingly untenable. The futility of the idea has been demonstrated by foreign stations broadcasting alternative information and information which has been censored lo-

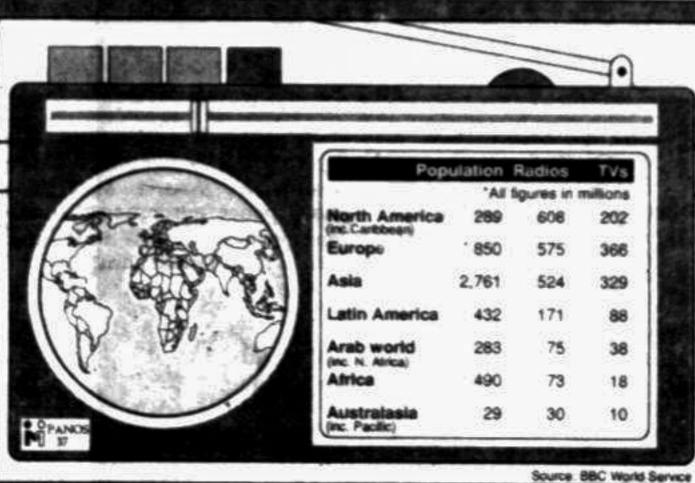
Mali has led the way with legislative changes, by democratisation of the national radio following the fall of the Moussa Traore regime in 1990, and by enabling three other stations to come into existence. A privately-owned television station is imminent. One of the new radio sta-

tions, Kayes Rural Radio, set up as part of Malian-Italian development cooperation during Traore's rule, aims at small farmers and their concerns. But the first to challenge

the state monopoly in the capi tal was radio Bamakan. Says di rector Modibo Diallo: "We took advantage of the legal vacuum to set ourselves up."

He notes that at one point the government wanted to close it down, but was deterred by the station's strong public support. It was catering for the main groups in the uprising which led to the fall of the dictatorship - young people, students and the unemployed.

The other two stations are radio Kaira, which began in How the world tunes in



June and is directed by filmmaker Cheikh Oumar Sissokho, and Radio Liberte, the only openly commercial sta-

Burkina Faso, another pioneer of radio pluralism, has two commercial stations: Radio Horizon in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. Their accent is on music, games and sport. Founder Moustapha Thiombano - who sees himself more as an artiste than as a journal ist - says a survey by the international station Radio Africa No. 1 showed that Horizon was more popular with the audience than international broad-

times bowl or bowled at

around this pace - Hadlee.

casts or the official radio. which he says, "plays nothing but drumbeats.

The changing situation is illustrated in Senegal, where a dynamic and professional press has contrasted with an inviolable state monopoly of

the airwaves. Now, however, Radio France Internationale and a local partner broadcast 40 hours of "world programmes" in addition to output from Radio Senegal. The Dakar authorities are also negotiating with a number of Senegalese proposers of commercial FM stations. (FM requires less

a batting line-up using their

very secret way of gripping the

ball and delivering the ball at a

very high pace. A question still

lingers in the minds of the

die-hard critics - doctoring

the ball. Maybe, the Pakis doc-

tor the ball while playing on

homegrounds but how can they

be fooling the scrutinizing eyes

of umpires when playing away

from home and winning as

well? The English umpires

are, arguably, the best, most

efficient and most reliable in

equipment than short or medium wavebands.) Negotiations are most ad-

vanced with the group which publishes the weekly newspaper Sud Hebdo, but two other publications - the daily Le Soldil and the satirical weekly Le Cafard Libere - have submitted proposals. Negotiations with Sudcommunication, publishers of Sud Hebdo, have been tough because the government wants to treat local groups and international organisations on the same footing when it comes to renting airtime, and also seeks to place draconian restrictions on access to advertising.

Earlier this year President Abdou Diouf disclosed that the creation of a second radio and TV channel, like those in Kenya and Zimbabwe, was under consideration. Senegal also now has a radio and television council, whose responsibilities include managing airtime allocated to candidates during elections. Benin, Gabon, Niger, Togo and Congo have Communications Councils with varying powers and roles.

Despite such changes, governments are still hesitant about relaxing control over radio - even in a country like Ghana, with its reputation as a star pupil of World Bank-International Monetary Fund economic liberalisation.

Neighbouring Nigeria, with its four national and 32 federal stations, also has no private radio. Mohammad Sani Zorro. president of the Nigerian journalists union, says the union is campaigning hard for liberalisation of the airwaves, and Nigerian media professionals are pressing for the establishment of an independent body responsible for management of communications.

Their campaign may be boosted by a conference on radio pluralism in West Africa, to be held in Abuja, Nigeria's administrative capital, in January, organised by the West African Journalists Association

and the Panos Institute. The meeting will provide a chance to take stock, and will consider a major study on radio pluralism in West Africa currently being prepared by

the Association and Panos.

OPINION

An Ideal Solution

communication between the country. two political adversaries of the nation? Their present method provided the readers with exof communication is doing emplary letters between the nothing but further aggravating two political adversaries. I am

movement wouldn't have been the prime minister and the possible without the mutual leader of the opposition to inlead the country towards pros-

the indifference between the democracy that we achieved prime minister and the leader after nine years of suppression. of the opposition is in front of The need of the hour is that us: the violence on the univer- our two leaders should one sity campuses, the killing of again join hands and work as a Ratan Sen, the attempted as- team crushing the anti-demosassination of Rashed Khan cratic activities going on in the Menon and many other related country. The whole nation is incidents terrorising the coun- looking forward to their mutry. This is occurring because tual negotiation that may crecertain alien evil forces are ate history. Otherwise, a miraworking against the better- cle can only release us from ment of the country. These the prevailing cursed situation. forces are taking advantage of 'It is the two leading political the bitter relationship between the government and the leading opposition party. This is what our two pre-eminent leaders are unable to realise: #t's too late? they are too much busy in mu-

tual recrimination.

M Ali for his article, "A Corre- leaders to stop mud slinging at spondence That Could Change each other and cooperate in Our Country," published in order to resolve the socio-ecoyour August 24 issue. I must nomic and political problems say that this is the most prob- the entire nation is facing. It is able solution to our current not the time for arguments but problems. What could be a bet- for implementation of policies ter way of changing the coun- which may change the political try, than a proper means of and economic climate of the In his article Mr S M Ali has

sure, like me, my fellow citi-The 1990's democratic zens would also like to request

Behind every activity of dominating motive and that is The consequences due to the preservation of the present parities whose joint-venture can instigate a change in the country. Why wait for a miracle, why not give it a try before

> Nusrat N Siddique Dhaka Cantonment RA

Lo 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.

Swinging the old ball

Sir. The hullabaloo created by the English players, press and the cricket authorities on the recent victory of Pakistan over the Mother country came as no surprise. The English have long been showing this "cry-baby" attitude. They didn't like the pace like fire of Lillee and Thomson in 1974, nor the thunderballs delivered by Roberts and Holding in 1976 - in both the cases they termed the bowling as intimidating. They never liked losing to the sub-continent teams in spinning tracks away from home, terming them as underprepared. Since the early sev enties when the England team started to decline from their high standing in Test cricket, their attitude problem started to worsen. However, things have changed a bit over the last decade as England seem to take defeat from a White Test team quite gracefully but come a team from the sub-continent and beat them, then they seem to find all the faults in the world with tactics put to use by the winners. The verbal battle of Faisalabad between Mike Gatting and Shakoor Rana in late 1987, however, has made Pakistan the numero uno in hate list of the British public and press. Pakistan also

had a major role to play in

their poor public image by petty matters like using too many substitutes on the field or unnecessary appealing by the bowler and the wicketkeeper. Also the lack of sophistication of their top players and officials like Javed Miandad and Haseeb Ahsan has made them very unpopular with the British press.

The most noticeable allegation against the victorious Pakistan this time, however, deals with the fine arts of fast swing bowling, specially with the old ball. A long accepted thing about swing bowling is that swinging a ball becomes tougher as it gets older. It is commonly believed that the shine, shape, seam condition and dryness of the ball are most important in swinging the ball as well as a helpful pitch. There is also an aerodynamic factor involved in the swinging of a ball in the air and after pitching. According to aerodynamics, a ball is likely to swing more or less depending on the wind speed and direction, gripping of the ball, angle of delivery and the pace at which the ball is delivered. The ideal delivery speed of a ball should be between 60-70 mph for it swing prodigiously. of course, using the conventional grip on the ball. The greatest swing bowlers of our

Botham, Kapil. But during the early eighties, Imran Khan, bowling at a greater pace than the trio above, started to bowl a special delivery which came from way outside the off stump and went outside the leg stump. This was different from traditional in-swinger, because not only was it swinging at very high pace. Imran produced the delivery more often with an older ball. Richie Benaud rightly named this killer delivery as an "in-dipper". Hall, Griffith, Lillee, Thomson, Procter. Roberts. Holding. Snow - great fast bowlers that they were, they could never produce such a delivery with such great consistency as Imran, that too with an older ball. This goes totally against the traditional belief of a ball swinging less and less with the ageing of the ball. So why this anomaly? Have the Pakis been doctoring the ball all this

The real secret came to Sarfraz Nawaz one day while practicing at the nets in Pakistan. Almost like a prophecy Sarfraz suddenly knew how to grip the old ball in order to make it swing even more than a newer one. He immediately and unselfishly passed the secret to his pace mate and friend Imran, who bowling at a greater pace than Sarfraz, but using his (Sarfraz's) new found way of gripping the ball, became an unplayable bowler with the old ball. Imran, the great captain and motivator, taught his disciples the trick of the old ball. His star pupils. Wasim Akram and Wagar Younis, have thus destroyed many

the world. So all credit is due to the Pakistanis for discovering the trick of swinging the old ball. S M Shahrukh Motifheel C/A, Dhaka Student leaders Sir, It has been brought to my notice that certain bad elements who are actually committing the crimes of tollcollection, hijacking etc are trying to use the names of prominent student leaders of both opposition and govern-

ment party's student fronts. In

reality, majority of the student leaders are doing fair politics and under no way associated with any such offences. I would request the law enforcing agencies to keep strict vigilance so that actual criminals may not escape from the hand of law by impersonating themselves as prominent student leaders or their close as-M Zahidul Hague

Assistant Professor, Bangladesh Agricultural Institute, Dhaka

First I would like to express ment for our country and it is my deep appreciation to Mr S high time for our political

the situation.

cooperation among the politi- dulge in private confidential cal parties. It was possible correspondence between then; why can't it work now? them. If such a correspon-The main reason behind all dence exists we believe, politithis is a lack of proper com- cal stability, economic growth munication between the two and proper law and order situeminent political leaders of ation will be quite imminent. the country. Two years ago My plea to the leaders is that they worked together to top- they read his article and give a ple the autocratic government: quick though to the proposed now they can work together to matter. perity. We all know that two ours, there should be one heads are better than one.

This is a very crucial mo-