### A Timely Stitch

The government is complacent about the AIDS outlook of this nation. This rather than be reassuring, disturbs us no end. There are enough reasons for that. To take only two into account: Growing landlessness and pauperisation leading to a massive increase in our floating population which is fast losing traditional family ties and, two, an exponential growth of Bangladeshis travelling abroad - to and fro-style. These two developments, all by themselves, have already made Bangladesh highly vulnerable to an onset of AIDS far beyond our meagre means of the existing health control situation. How can we make our people adequately aware of the danger if we cannot persuade our government to shed its complacence and start preparing in time for a very crucial socio-somatic engagement?

The government has two adequately equipped testing laboratories for scanning AIDS suspects only one out of these still operational and the other lying idle for long. Between them the two have, it is claimed, examined 45,000 persons of whom 9 have tested HIV positive. This should have been an eye-opener instead of a point of satisfaction to the government. It would take only primary-school arithmetic to get at the number who could test positive in a population of more than 110 million. We have long allowed discounts on such arithmetical projections, due, legitimately enough, to facts of our people's strong adherence to familial ties and to religious tenets tabooing promiscuity.

It is now evident that we cannot anymore count so much on that or on our slow pace of urbanisation to act effectively against an outbreak of AIDS epidemic. In neighboring India, with whose people we share sexual morals by a great measure, 11,000 have already been identified to be infected with HIV, the virus that unfailingly causes AIDS. And AIDS is the disease out to displace cancer as spelling sure-fire death. Again, where cancer is not infections, AIDS very much is and, unchecked, can spread like wildfire and destroy a whole population. In India, if something on a very big and radical scale is not done to contain it, as many as a whole of a million people will fall victim to AIDS in a matter of three years.

There is not one urban settlement in Bangladesh which doesn't have its own red-light district or an array of them. Hippocratic religious zealotry has, in certain cities, helped by an influx of destitute population from the villages, spread the flesh trade beyond the limits of specified districts. That is to say beyond any check and control. The cinema and the girlie magazines, printed and other pornography, specially the sizzling bluefilms on video-tape — although found to be rather harmless in the western industrialised nations are inexorably working a change in our people's sex-related attitudes, that is helping promote promiscuity in all sections of our people. Promiscuity spreads AIDS as the anopheles spreads malaria.

Bangladeshis are going abroad to work in ever greater numbers. Almost all of them are unmarried singles or leaving home their families and spending long spells of time in countries some of which are already inside the AIDS scare-net.

We do not know how can we avert our eyes from a threat that is staring in our face? Perhaps we need a campaigner of the size of Dr Ibrahim to materialise an effective and big and timely step to stop the AIDS wave short of the shores of our dear hapless country. We shall be dearly watching for such a pioneer either in the person of an individual or in the shape of associations or groups if the government continues to be as impervious to the danger as it seems to be at the moment.

### A Dilemma for Yeltsin

Boris Yeltsin has found out by now that it can be more difficult to demolish an established political party than to form a new one. After quite a few twists and turns in the on-going battle between the Communist Party and the President of Russia, a kind of temporary solution has been reached, a solution in which both sides claim victory. In a mixed verdict delivered by Russia's Constitutional Court, said to be the country's top judicial organ, Yeltsin's ban on the party has been upheld, but the organisation is being allowed to resume grassroots activity which, in time, would pave the way for its reorganisation.

The Court's ruling is also interpreted to mean that Yeltsin would not be impeached now by the Party Congress which continues to be dominated by Communists led by hardline Marxist Yegor Ligachev.

Yeltsin's followers may be right in seeing the court's decision as a compromise, while Ligachev probably has a case for assuming that the party can now "both revive and unify."

Whatever the two sides may say, this kind of compromise cannot last for long. It offers both sides the necessary breathing time to prepare for the next round.

Judging by newspaper reports from Moscow, the strategy followed by Yeltsin may be suffering from a number of weaknesses. In the first place, the Russian leader should appreciate that a political party cannot just be banned by presidential decrees, in total disregard of the Rule of Law. If Russia is to set up a multi-party democracy, it must provide for a legitimate role for the Communist Party unless the party decides from within to dissolve itself or to set up a new structure, complete with a new agenda and a new name.

The list of misdeeds committed by the leadership of the Communist Party of the former Soviet Union may indeed be long. Many of the top hardliners may well deserve to be tried for alleged crimes committed against the people. Yet, there are people at lower levels of the organisation, who, as dedicated social reformers, can render much help and assistance to the Yeltsin regime. To alienate them or to isolate them from the mainstream politics would be a serious mistake. Judging by developments in different parts of the former Soviet Union, in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Germany, Yeltsin certainly needs a left-ofcentre political party to serve as a shield against rightwing extremism, anti-semitism and ethnic conflicts. The vacuum that will be created by the demolition of the Communist Party may not necessarily be a move towards stability and democracy. Veltsin must look for other options.

### SAARC Summit

## Nations Must Adopt Means to Ensure Lasting Peace

ANGLADESH is going to the seventh SAARC summit Dhaka for three days from 12 December. Adequate preparations are being made with a sense of dedication for the objective of the organisation, since it was late President Ziaur Rahman who conceived the idea of co-operation in the

Cooperation among the States is the spirit of the time in the 'unipolar world' at large after the fall of communism. Ziaur Rahman gave an institutional shape to that spirit on a regional basis, to be emulated in other regions of the world, which is now at the thresh-

hold of 21st Century. The need for an organisation like SAARC is felt more today in the context of the changing world. But the success of the ensuing Seventh SAARC Conference and the effective role to be played by it in order to achieve its objectives depend upon willing and sincere co-operation of the member states. If there are internal troubles in a member state, its attempt to co-operate with others is disturbed and it there be causes of distrust had friction between the member states, their mutual co-operation becomes near impossible. And, as such their attitude of confrontation may cast its shadow on the organisation as a whole.

Let alone the internal disturbance of any member state, want to discuss two issues

bearing upon the relations of certain member states, and foreboding a shadow on the spirit of regional co-operation. One is the issue of operation 'Push Back' launched by India, and the other is the perennial dispute between India and Pakistan on Kashmir.

Push-back Discussion about 'Push back' has become academic in view of the reported halt of the operation by New Delhi. I wish it comes true. But it has not diminished the gravity of the issue, since it was hotly discussed in our Parliament questioning the wisdom of our Prime Minister in accepting Paragraph 11 of the communique jointly issued by Bangladesh and Indian Governments on 28th May, 1992 on the occasion of the visit by Begum Khaleda Zia to New Delhi. The discussion inside and outside Parliament also questioned the bonafides of the Government of India in initiating such operation on the supposed basis of that paragraph which reads as follows: "Taking into account the problems being caused due to large-scale illegal immigration of people across their borders, they (the two Prime Ministers) expressed their determination to stop illegal movement of people across the border by all possible means including the strengthening of existing arrangements and mutual cooperation in this regard." Ref:

by Md. Moksudur Rahman

Star 2.11.92).

In this para no time has

been mentioned since when

the illegal immigration took place, nor does it contemplate sending back of the persons even if, they have illegally went there for settlement. The two Prime Ministers expressed their determination to stop illegal movement of people across the border. Their determination is to stop, from the day the communique is issued, the illegal movement of people across the border, and not to send back persons, who migrated to India before issuance of the communique. The attempt to 'push back' or push-in would be justified if it could be established that the persons concerned went there from Bangladesh, and that of course, required prior discussion. So, the operation 'push back' could not be undertaken by any stretch of imagination under the strength of Paragraph 11 of the communique, nor the Government of India has said that in view of the said communique the action was taken. Thank God, the Government of India has halted the operation, but the mystery continues to shroud the mind.

The incidents of 'push back' or 'push in' definitely give rise to doubts in the minds of the people of Bangladesh about the intention of Indian Government, even if it has not affected the existing good re-

Kashmir

The Second issue is Kashmir — the sole cause of dispute between India and Pakistan. It is no doubt a bilateral issue, but from 1948 till the birth of Bangladesh in December, 1971, we shouted against India for 'occupying' Kashmir, terming the part of the territory under control of Pakistan as "Azad Kashmir" But in the light of the facts now available it seems the position is just the reverse.

The SAARC charter may bar

the members from raising "bilateral and contentions" issues in the meeting. But this barring provision is based on apprehension that "internal matters" may also be brought to discussion, once the door is opened, to the prejudice of either of the parties. In the greater interest of peace in and among the SAARC countries, its charter may be amended to accommodate discussion of bilateral matters without prejudice to the interest of the Governments concerned. In view of the suggestion I need not enter into the merits of the claims of India and Pakistan over Kashmir issue. But certain patent facts are revealed from the records of the Security Council of the United Nations. "In January, 1948 India complained to the Security Council that tribes-

Pakistan's support and particilations between the two counpation, were invading Kashmir and that extensive fighting was taking place. Pakistan denied the charges and declared that Kashmir's accession to India was illegal. The Security

men and others, with

Council established a Commission for India and Pakistan to investigate and mediate. The Commission made proposal to both India and Pakistan regarding cease-fire and troops withdrawal and also proposed that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir be decided by free and impartial plebiscite. Both sides accepted the proposals. The cease-fire came into effect on 1 January, 1949. There was again war between India and Pakistan in September, 1965 and thereafter a joint declaration made at Tashkent in pursuance of which troops were withdrawn to positions held before 5 August, 1965. After the war in

1971 between India and

Pakistan, Simla Agreement was

made in July, 1972 defining

the line of control. In all these processes relating to the dispute between India and Pakistan on Kashmir the people of Kashmir were not parties. The fact remains that Kashmir is divided into two parts by a line of control causing miseries understandably, to the Kashmiries who had no choice or say in the matter. The agitation by the militants from 1990 and the attempts made by their supporters to march from Pakistan side of Kashmir have only caused loss of lives and property. Their agitation could have face-saving value had it been directed towards re-unification of Kashmir, as the people of Kashmir seem to suffer badly on account of its division in two parts controlled by two governments.

The Baily Star 4

Committee to Contain Violence

Even though the charter of SAARC Organisation does not permit the discussion of bilateral disputes, there is no bar to devise a mechanism for resolution of the problems threatening peace in the area. For example, a committee may be formed comprising two representatives from each member country. The initial function of the committee will be to contain the agitation and violence through dialogue with, say for example, militant groups in Kashmir and the respective governments. suggesting ways and means to arrive at reasonable solutions of problems keeping in view the developments that took place during the last 45 years after partition of India. This committee may also be allowed to probe into the Tamil problem is Sri Lanka. Violence should not be allowed to disturb peace in the area. Wrong means cannot produce good results.

The writer is a former Judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

# More Bidding for Security Council Seats

HEN an unnamed US official was asked early this year for a response to growing demands to restructure the UN Security Council, his reply implicitly reflected US displeasure at such a move: 'It ain't broke. So don't fix it.'

But with the opening of the 47th session of he General Assembly, the Security Council was once again in the political spotlight with two countries -Germany and Japan — knocking at its door to gain admission as permanent members.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told the Assembly his country will not take the initiative in proposing reforms, but 'if a change in the Council's composition is actually considered, we too shall seek a per-

manent seat'. The Germans, in fact, have openly declared they want the Japanese to do the political dirty work for them. If Japan pushes for a permanent seat, Germany will follow suit. Kinkel told a German newspaper in August.

OLDIERS used to fight

wars on fields far remo-

ved from civilian popu-

timates that 1.5 million chil-

dren worldwide have been

killed over the past decade as

a direct result of wars and civil

strife. And that for every child

killed, three more have been

injured or physically disabled.

traumatised by the impact of

changed.

Sadaaki Numata, a Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, told reporters here, there was a 'general aspiration' in Japan to join the Council as a permanent member. The Japanese argue that 'countries with global influence' should be represented in the Council.

Shah AMS Kibria, The Daily

Last year, there were rumours that Japan had offered to pay off the mounting \$1.8 billion debt owed by memberstates to the world body, provided Tokyo was assured of a permanent Security Council seat. The United States described this as 'cheque book diplomacy but Japan denied it made the offer.

Currently, the Council has five permanent members with veto powers (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States), and 10 non-permanent members who are elected to hold office on a regional basis for two-year periods.

The 'Big Five' hold privileged positions as the World War II victors: a position described by Third World nations as 'anachronistic 50 years

Thalif Deen writes from New York

Many countries have said that the make-up of the UN Security Council is anachronistic and should be changed to reflect the present-day global situation.

Although the UN Charter affirms the principle that all nations are equal, some are considered more equal than others, particularly in the Security Council.

In a report released in August, the Geneva-based South Centre said developing countries have to work from the premise they require two things from change in the Security Council.

Firstly, there should be a set of measures within the Council and in the General Assembly which would prevent the Council from being used as an instrument in the service of a few powerful countries acting as a self-appointed directorate.

Secondly, Security Council membership and powers

should bear greater relationship to democratic ideals, and enable the Council to respond to the more comprehensive understanding of 'collective security' which has been evolv-

The South Centre has complained that the fundamental meaning of the 50year-old Charter 'has sometimes been ignored, twisted or misused for their own advantage by men with power':

Addressing the General Assembly, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Den Broek spelled out perhaps the most comprehensive proposals for radical changes in the Council.

Since Article 24 of the Charter specifies that the Council acts on behalf of all members, the Dutch Minister

said, the Council should be representative of the 179 member world body.

Were the Council to become an exclusive club disconnected from the UN membership as a whole, this might tend to undermine its authority and diminish its effectiveness, he argued. A possible solution to this question, he said, might be found in severing the automatic link between permanent membership of the Council and the right of veto. A number of concrete options can be considered in this respect, he

He said consideration could be given to the adoption of a double veto: two negative votes by permanent members being required to hold up a decision, instead of one. Also, there could be semi-permanent membership of the Security Council, to be applied to a certain category of states for five to seven years, possibly without the right of veto. To determine which countries would be eligible for this type of membership, it seems to me

that two criteria are relevant: both the political weight of the country concerned and the degree to which its membership would contribute to a more equitable geographical distribution of the Council's composition', he said.

Under this category, six countries have been mentioned as potential members of a revamped Council: Japan, Germany, India, Egypt, Nigeria and Brazil. To expand the Council, however, the Charter has to be amended by twothirds of the 179 members of the General Assembly, including the permanent members of the Council.

But early this year, former US Ambassador to the United Nations Thomas Pickering was quoted as saying that any change in the Council could only open a Pandora's box.

> -Third World Network Features/IPS

Thalif Deen is Development Editor of Inter Press Service. with whose permission this article is reprinted.

### More Children than Soldiers Die in Wars

Ian Steele writes from United Nations

lations, but all that has The ways in which "modern" wars impact on chil-Urban centres in many dren almost defy listing. parts of the world have be-UNICEF is helping children come battlegrounds, and serand families in Africa, Asia,

vices for civilians, including Latin America and the Middle hospitals and schools, are East who: often targets of choice. · are starving because farms The United Nations have been ravaged and food Children's Fund (UNICEF) es-

supplies disrupted; · suffer from life-threatening discase because health centres have been ransacked and immunisation programmes

interrupted; · are illiterate and denied a An estimated 10 million have formal education because their also been psychologically schools have been burned or their teachers murdered; · were abducted into armies

Probably 10 children lose their lives for every soldier

and ordered to kill: were orphaned;

· were physically or emo-

tionally disabled by acts of vio

lence. More children than soldiers are dying every day as a result of armed conflicts in Somalia Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, according to James P Grant,

> UNICEF Executive Director. "Probably 10 children lose their lives for every soldier,' he said. "In Yugoslavia, twothirds of the refugees are chil

dren. In Sarajevo bombs fall on civilians, especially children, and the same goes for Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. In Kabul, 800,000 of the two million residents live on the

streets, without food, without

anything. The world will have

to find a way to solve this

problem." Mr Grant points to the cruel inconsistency of blatant humanitarian violations at a time in international affairs when the Cold War is over and

UNICEF has in fact showed the way towards protection for children in armed conflict through its involvement in the development and global acceptance of an International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over the past

decade it has negotiated with

warring factions in several

countries to allow the safe pas-

sage of humanitarian relief for

Lebanon, "days of tranquility"

apartheid is being dismantled.

children and mothers. In El Salvador, a civil war was suspended on three separate days of each year over the last seven years, so that children could be immunised. In were declared so that children could be vaccinated. And in the Sudan, opposing

forces agreed to "corridors of peace" for the safe passage of essential supplies to children and women trapped in war zones. Similar agreements were negotiated in Angola and Ethiopia, and at the height of the Persian Gulf conflict, essential medical supplies were delivered for children and women in Iraq.

These negotiations were complex but the rationale was simple enough: There could be no victors in a nation where violence, hatred, disease, malnutrition or illiteracy had irreparably compromised the development of succeeding generations. - Depthnews Asia

### lotte buttor.

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.

### Accountability

Sir, The system of accountability is being talked of too frequently now-a-days and it is being hoped that the government now in the helm of affairs will ensure the process of accountability in the administration. In fact accountability is very important not only in the matter of administration but also in various non-Govt private organisations and even personal and domestic matters.

If we want to construct a house, we arrange necessary funds and buy construction materials and engage a mason for the purpose. It becomes incumbent on us to see that the mason executes the work with utmost sincerity and zeal and it requires constant supervision to see whether the materials are used exact to the proportion needed and the work is carried out properly. If we do not take care to look closely into the performance and insist upon strict compliance, we shall invariably be faced with frustration and the work may not find a successful

completion.

It is said that "spare the rod and spoil the child". Here again it is accountability. A child who has been schooled or put under a tutor does not learn his lesson properly, a process of accountability is applied. In the past such pressure from teachers upon students was very strict and the outcome was also excellent. Now-a-days the students face virtually no pressure and so the result is rather disappoint-

To my mind the process of accountability is wide and has the scope of implementation in all spheres of our national life. If a sense of responsibility and anxiety is created at every stage, it is expected that the instances of inaction and tall talks will gradually come down yielding place to achievements instead.

M II Shalkh Plassey, Dhaka.

### Stranded Pakistanis

Sir, We, a group of stranded Pakistanis in Chittagong, would like to bring to the kind notice of the Governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh and also the concerned authorities involved in the cause of repatriation that the survey conducted by RABITA and SPGRC in March last was contrary to human survey procedure. RABITA has been authorised

for census of stranded Pakistanis in all over Bangladesh in which the role of SPGRC was to identify who is genuine Pakistani or not as per his/her previous documentation. But in spite of making survey in accordance with the formal procedure, both the organisations involved were selling repatriation tickets and taking money from the helpless stranded Pakistanis against their survey. They also fixed-up rates as under:

51.00 per head family Enumeration and Census Token Fee .... @ Tk 10.00 per

Documentation Fee. , .@Tk

head family Code Number Fee . . . @Tk 10.00 per head family Photographic Charges. .

@Tk 22.00 per head family Identity Card Fee. . . @Tk 130.00 per head family Here we want to know what

is the reason for fixing charges against survey while the whole expenditure of survey - photographs, identity cards, fooding and conveyance of the surveyors etc - was supposed to be borne by Pakistan Embassy, Dhaka.

In Chittagong, the whole population of stranded

Pakistanis consists about 2600 head families and as per an estimation a sum of Tk 5,79,800.00 has so far been collected by SPGRC and RABITA at the time of recent

survey.

Besides this, the organisations have reportedly collected approximately Taka six lac (Tk 2,000/-, Tk 3,000/-, Tk 5000/- & Tk 10,000/- each, as the case may be) against sale of repatriation ticket to those well-to-do stranded Pakistanis who are living outside of Sardar Bahadur Nagar Camp,

Chittagong. It may also be mentioned here that there are different categories of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh. Many of them are widows. Some of them are cleared persons ready for repatriation. Some stranded Pakistanis' wives are Bangalee and some woman stranded Pakistanis' Husbands are Bangalee. Some are bustnessmen and some others are earning their livelihood from private sector companies many of them are Government while employees. They are of two categories: Some are working at present in concerned departments and others are still unemployed since 16-12-

1971. In the context of the above mentioned categories of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh one tends to ask what provision of law has been prepared by RABITA and

SPGRC for survey of such kinds of stranded Pakistanis and as to how they completed the census of Urdu-speaking government employees presently working in Bangladesh and what would be the future of these employees after their repatriation to Pakistan? We came to learn through

the newspapers and other media that the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Nawaz Sharif, has agreed to take back 3000 stranded Pakistanis from Bangladesh by December this year in first phase, assuring that the repatriation of remaining families would be continued in phases on availability of funds and completion of accommodation for them in Pakistan. In connection with this phase of repatriation we like to point out that necessary steps should be taken by the Government of Bangladesh to lift first those stranded Pakistanis who are occupying Railway properties in Chittagong since creation of Bangladesh such as Sardar Bahadur School Camp, Islamia School Camp, Segunbaghan and its adjoining Railway bangalows and Railway quarters for the greater interest of Railway authority.

Under the circumstances, we fervently appeal to both the governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh for immediate scrutiny of the present survey programme launched by

RABITA and SPGRC. A fresh survey may be called for involving Pakistani and Bangladesh governments' representatives so that no one stranded people suffers or is deprived of his/her fundamental rights.

A Group of Stranded Pakistanis Chittagong.

### The US voters

Sir, In the US presidential elections, Mr Bush was overwhelmingly defeated. One may think that the US voters are rather ungrateful to Mr Bush as he has the credit of uprooting the world communism, defeating Iraq and freeing Kuwait and promoting USA to the unparallel leadership of the planet, during the last four years. Mr Bush is unhappy as (according to him) the nation could not earnestly evaluate him. But we may have some questions: 1) What has he done for innocent Palestinian people? 2) Why he did not take actions against the Myanmar junta? 3) Why did he avoid solution to the Slovenian Muslim problem? 4) Was it logical to kidnap president Noriega from his country and put him on trial forcibly? The American people also

wanted to have the answers from Mr Bush.

Md Abdul Latif Khalifa Jessore.