Dhaka, Tuesday, June 15,1993

Challenge of Catastrophe for Bangladesh

Predictions about the country's environmental changes in the not so distant a future are grim, to say the least. A two-day workshop on "Greenhouse Effect and Climate Change: An Assessment of the Effects on Bangladesh" in the city organised by the Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) and participated by 60 climatologists from home and abroad has once again confirmed the worst fear that the country is facing an environmental crisis of catastrophic order. Earlier, scientists had assessed that from nearly a quarter to 40 per cent of the country's land area will go down under water with no chance for reclamation due to the global warming and sea-level rise.

If and when that happens, unforeseen and uncontrollable forces will be set in motion to upset the social and geographical order of the tiny nation. The scientists, however, are presently concerned about the immediate climate changes marked specially by both higher temperature and increased rainfall. It is at this point that the almost unmitigated bleak prospect seems to have a few limited benefits to offer: more rainfall means less dependence on irrigation and an increase of carbon dioxide content in atmosphere results in higher crop yield. But all this will be a small consolation for a country that has lost a substantial part of its land area to the sea.

Even any hope of small gains will be cut short by the unpredictable pattern of the climate. Abrupt climatic variations and extremes can never be an ideal condition for planning the country's agriculture. Floods, droughts and cyclones can more than obviate the gains achieved through increased soil moisture and carbon dioxide. It can be far worse if considered in the context of the anticipated adverse effects of the sea-level rise on the Sunderbans. Damage or destruction of the mangrove of the Sunderbans caused by the increased salinity of sea waters will not only bring an end to the world's unique eco-system main(ained by the bio-diversity there but also remove the natural barrier against cyclone. The coastal belt of the country is fated to have a large share of the natural onslaughts any-

When the wrath of nature is so real, how will Bangladesh respond to the gigantic challenges facing it? One answer to this question has emerged from the workshop in that the country has been advised not to spend its "scarce resources now on strategies designed specially at reducing the anticipated effects of climate change." What it should do, according to the recommendation of the workshop, is to adopt policies and programmes meant for addressing social precautionary and hazard adjustment problems. Resource constraints will certainly not allow the country to go for any long-term and comprehensive environmental management programme, no doubt about that. But without such a programme the country stands little chance of averting the predicted catastrophe. Piecemeal solution to the problems may prove no solution at all.

Nor is this problem going to affect Bangladesh alone. Moreover, the undisputed fact that man and only man is responsible for this unprecedented en vironmental mess points to the need for a global strategy capable of arresting further deterioration of the planet's health. Notwithstanding the increased awareness of environmental issues world over and promises for saving a common future for the mankind, the governments of the rich and scientifically developed countries have shown little interest in evolving a common strategy for meeting the environmental challenges. The Dhaka workshop has rightly suggested that an equitable international sharing of responsibilities is necessary for developing strategies to fight the global warming.

Godspeed to Ciller and Campbell

Canada and Turkey, geographically far apart and politically a little distant from each other, now face a common and welcome development. Both the countries have placed their destinies in the hands of women prime ministers.

Of the two cases, the election of Tansu Ciller, 47, who has been dubbed as the "Lady with the Steel Smile" as the first woman Prime Minister of secular but predominantly Muslim Turkey is undoubtedly dramatic, almost spectacular. Strangely enough, she has much in common with Kim Campbell, a feisty lawyer who served as Defence Minister, in the outgoing administration, and now becomes the first woman head of government in the North American country. Both the women have moved up to their present positions from within the system, gaining their political and administrative experience through ministerial responsibilities. backed by excellent academic credentials. Again, the two are virtually of the same age. Campbell is only a year younger than the Turkish leader.

These pleasant coincidences apart, both the leaders face formidable problems in economic and political fields. For Canada, there is the unresolved Quebec issue; for Turkey, the Kurd question can no longer be pushed under the carpet. Campbell's support for free trade with the United States which. critics say, has caused devastation to the Canadian economy may call for a careful review, while Ciller must pay immediate attention to the need to bring down inflation, an area where her own performance has not been all that impressive as a minister in the outgoing cabinet of Suleyman Demirel, now the President of Turkey. Ciller also faces the challenge of taking her country whose human rights record is still being challenged by the West into the European Community. However, with parts of Eastern Europe in flame, Turkey may now have other thoughts in mind than joining the Community.

From this distance, Bangladesh which regards both Turkey and Canada as good allies and dependable partners in co-operation would wish godspeed to both Ciller and Campbell. Let them succeed in their new jobs and set new standards in the exercise of government leadership.

A View from Srinagar: Hardening of Attitudes

The modus operandi is that a neighbourhood is cordoned off. Unarmed civilians are searched and

forced to file past a posse of hooded 'cats' or informers. None is exempt, not even a former chief

justice who was required to wait in the open for two days. Around 10,000 are still in detention.

VERY time I visit Kashmir, I find it more distant than before. Alienation was the apt word to describe the feelings a few months ago when I was in Srinagar last. Now it is something worse. There is hardening of attitudes. Most of it can be attributed to the excesses by the security forces, particularly

ond place. 9

centres before release. Many

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for two days. Around 10,000 are

cent days have increased," say

representatives of the Srinagar

bar. They complain that orders

by judges for inquiry have not

been complied with and even

contempt proceedings are pend-

ing. There is no relief available,

they contend. They make no

secret about their lack of faith

in the process of law. Some in

the administration have, how

ever, nicknamed the Srinagar*

High Court as the Lahore High

Court, alleging partiality to-

fought on the ground, not in

law courts. No doubt, the mili-

tancy has lessened. But it has

The real battle is being

The custodial deaths in re-

still in detention.

wards militants.

The modus operandi is that

have died in the process.

the Border Security Force (BSF) As member of a human rights group, I went to see many affected families at their homes. The pain etched on their faces is haunting. Their stories are different but their charge is the same: the BSF's brutality. "We can take killings in the crossfiring in our stride," said a retired civil servant. "Our objection is to murders in cold

Top officials admit the excesses and attribute them to either the relentless pressure under which the force works or to the lack of its familiarity with local language and traditions. There is a list of nearly 200 jawans and officers, who have been punished in the last three years. Apparently, the message has not gone home.

The BSF repeated in Srinagar on April 10 what it did in the market town of Sopore on January 6, within a span of three months. The 'erring' localities at both places were set on fire, followed by shots at random at the escapees. The death toll was five in Srinagar and 44 in Sopore. This was the collective punishment for burning at the first place a building which one BSF company vacated before the other took over and for snatching two light machine guns from the force at the sec-

EJECTION of the Vance-

Owen peace plan by the

Bosnian assembly took

Russia by surprise and put President Boris Yeltsin in a

difficult position. Having decla-

red support for Western military

action the day after his cons-

titutional referendum victory,

ical complications pointed to

postponing decision on ex-

Yugoslavia until after the

Bosnian Serb referendum. He

could also hope for a better

moment when the five perma-

nent members of the UN

Security Council met (under

Russian presidency during May)

under pressure from Wa-

shington, looked like having

agreed to participate in military

peacemaking. On May 6 there

took place in the Defence

Ministry in Moscow the first

joint meeting of the top-ranking

collegium of the Foreign and

Defence Ministries. Their sub-

stantial differences were re-

duced to a minimum. A major

point had been Defence

Minister Marshal Pavel Gra-

chev's objection to increasing

the present Russian peace-

keeping contingent in Yug-

meeting between Grachev and

United States President Bill

Clinton's ambassador-at-large,

Strobe Talbott, led to an ac-

commodation with Washington.

Moscow had insisted that any

action must be under the aegis

of the UN or the Conference on

Security and Cooperation in

Europe (CSCE). Now it agreed to

participate under that of the

North Atlantic Treaty Organi-

OREIGN pharmaceuti-

Two days later an urgent

oslavia.

On the other hand, Russia,

to discuss territorial details.

On one hand, domestic polit-

he was torn two ways.

taken a firmer and more coherent shape. Small groups have Such tragedies, no doubt, more or less ceased functioning. openly condemned by the administration, have left a deep The two organisations which mark on the people's minds. have emerged are: the Jammu But what has caused major resentment is the feeling that every person is taken for a militant until he is cleared. Numerous people, professors, doctors, lawyers and students, have been picked up by the security forces on mere suspicion and given a third degree punishment at various interrogation

and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and the Hizbe Mujahideen. The first one, demanding independence, has wider popular support than the second one, which has pro-Pakistan leanings. But the latter has more guns which, the administration says, came from across the border where it is preferred

fighting New Delhi. The militancy has, in fact, galvanised the people and they want to administer their affairs in their own way. Of course, there is also an element of fear of those who wield the gun.

Every lapse on the part of administration - there is no coordination between the advisers and the governor - takes the form of agitation. Only the other day a 15,000-strong local police force in Srinagar took to the streets to protest against the killing of constable Riaz

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

Guns are not to the liking of the people. They criticise violence in public life. Most of them believe that HN Wanchoo, a human rights activist, and Dr Abdul Ahad Guru, a JKLF ideologue, were gunned down by militants who did not approve of their activities. "The cult of gun can destroy us," says a retired

Sayed Ali Gillani, a widely heard leader, who is pro-Hizbe Mujahideen, has condemned in the first volume of his 'Story of Imprisonment,' the abduction of Rubiya Saida, daughter of former Home Minister Mufti Mohamed Sayeed, and the killing of Mohammed Sayed Mausudi. But Gillani, like others, is sympathetic to militants because they are seen

Ahmed. After staging a demon stration in front of the UN observers office, they seized control of police headquarters. The BSF fired on them. As the situation deteriorated, the army was summoned. Soldiers disarmed the police and cleared headquarters of the mutineers without meeting any resistance Eighty policemen have been dismissed and two officers suspended since the mutiny.

This has only heightened tension in the valley. After the sunset, there is an certe feeling all over. One can even taste the hidden fears and possible violence. But there is no area which is under the control of militants, or where the security forces cannot reach. This is as much true of Sopore which I

visited at day time as of Srinagar where I spent five

On the last night of my stay drove through parts of Srinagar around 9 pm. The area, wrapped in total silence was descrited. No soldier was on the street. The BSF was ensconced in bunkers and militants somewhere else. I heard some gun shots that night but not on others. One afternoon militants hurled a hand grenade at a BSF vehicle, killing four. This was on a busy road, nearly 100 yards from where I stayed Normalcy returned within half a hour, men and women shopping and unwieldy buses clogging the traffic. This is a pattern with which the people have

learned to live I did see a couple of famous temples from outside. They are intact. However, according to official sources, nearly 40 small temples were partially damaged after the December 6 demolition at Ayodhya. The difference is that the damage in Srinagar, confined to outer walls, was at the hands of some miscreants while the Babri Masjid structure was destroyed by a frenzied

In sharp contrast Jammu, the temple town, which I visited on way back, sits in absolute peace. The killing of a Hindu leader in Doda, about 100 kilometres away, has created anxiety but has not disturbed communal harmony. Jammu is one place where the people wear the pro-India leanings on their siceves. They condemn the milt-

tants unequivocally and apprehend their operation in Jammu as well as if they will be punished for being pro-India. The Kashmiri pandits, who

have migrated from Kashmir and are still living in harrowing conditions outside the town, are less critical of militants. They say that most of them left their homes not because of militants but because of the government which promised to provide them ration, accommodation and salary in Jammu itself. They wish they had not migrated and hope to go back one day.

"Why don't you help them to return?" I had posed to this question to Gillani. His reply was:"They are our people. But let there be a settlement first." did not ask him to spell out the terms of settlement. He had told me a few days earlier that India must 'honour' its promise to hold a plebiscite to decide whether Kashmir wanted to join India or Pakistan. He added that if there were a consensus among India, Pakistan and Kashmir, he would go by that settlement. He made it clear that Kashmir meant the whole state of Jammu and Kashmir.

This observation would have had force if the Kashmiri identity, which at one time embraced the entire state, had asserted itself. Today communal divide is more visible than before. "This is only an aberration," assured a leading lawyer. "We believe in sufism and deep

below we are secular."

He may prove to be right one day. But what does India do in the meantime? A more humane administration, personal contact with people and the end of excesses may help it in the long run. At present, Kashmir is being held, not administered.

Bosnia? Russian Troops are Thinking of their Dachas

Andrew Martov writes from Moscow

A battalion of Russian motorised infantry is already in Bosnia under the UN flag. Defence Minister Andrei Grachev is working on plans for a peacekeeping force trained by Canadians and Scandinavians that will coordinate with NATO. But there are many problems. One is that the military is tired of the quarrelling politicians and indifferent to armed intervention in Yugoslavia. Gemini News Service reports that they are thinking more about dachas.

UN fields 23,000 in Balkans letherlands 1,019 Cenya 903 Nepal 901 Argentina 895 Macedonia Figures for UN personnel FU Source: UN, May 1993

sation (NATO).

As Yeltsin sees it, Russia can regain its place as a world military power by appearing an equal with America in the framework of a NATO international force.

Splendid as they may look, the hoped-for-fruits may be hard to achieve, given Russia's lack of experience in multinational operations, the lack of specialised preparation for a military contingent, and Yeltsin's indecisiveness over Yugoslavia.

There is also the resistance of the parliamentary opposition, which hotly argues that

Russia's first job is to establish order at home, not to sent Russian boys to die on foreign soil in a war betraying Slav interests and tying Russia to the

coat-tails of the US and NATO.

If the Security Council votes for force, conservatives in parliament will vote against dispatching Russian troops on the grounds that there is no law protecting the social conditions of peacemakers. A bill drafted last September is still stalled in parliamentary procedure. In any case, with Yeltsin, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Grachev in alliance, parliament is scarcely likely to say Yes.

ternational peacekeeping for 20 years. The first of the small groups periodically supplied to NATO was activated in October 1973. Members of such contingents are on training courses in Solnechnogorsky, near Moscow

Russia has known about in-

In April 1992, Russia sent its first large contingent - a battalion of motorised infantry - to Yugoslavia. In addition 10,000 Russian soldiers are peacekeeping, or peacemaking, abroad or in the "near-abroad" (Russia's name for ex-Soviet territory). Last year, according to the Russian Defence Ministry, they suffered 32 killed and 60 wounded, Yet there is still no professional preparation for a military contingent to take part in multinational forces.

If Moscow stands by Washington and sends a major contingent to ex-Yugoslavia, there are three possibilities:

1. The original plan Russia will provide transport aircraft based in former East Germany to carry UN troops. II will provide a small ground force, also in Germany, for administrative and logistical pur-

2. A "rush" version. This is to send one or two brigades (3,000-5,000 men) drawn from

a paratroop division, the formation best prepared for independent action outside Russia. There is the least desirable variant, according to retired general Viktor Filatov, a member of the opposition. Kozyrev has already promised to send 25,000 paratroops immediately on the heels of American air strikes. According to Filatov, who has not shown his evidence, the commander of Russia's paratroop forces has already received orders to this effect.

3. The most promising variant. This involves forming peacemaking forces on the basis of one division (10,000-12,000 men). Orders by Grachev envisage the creation by mid-June, in the Volage military district, of a special centre to which will be transferred a certain number of troops. The new organization, autonomous within the Russian armed forces, will receive special training under Canadian and Scandinavian instructors, and arrange for training courses abroad. The whole will permit secret coordination with analogous structures of NATO.

If Russia plays a major military role in Yugoslavia, it will have to be under the direction

of the Defence Ministry and general staff. Urgent steps will be needed to organise and mobilise the wherewithal to implement top political decisions.

When it comes to enlisting the active support of generals and other officers, allowance must be made for the fact that, although Yugoslavia is the top item for the Russian mass media, the picture the media give of unfolding events is confused.

Up to 1991, the army had a system of political instruction that, for all its deficiencies, helped provide an understanding of what was going on. Now, amid the multiplicity of views put forward in the media, its is often hard to follow what is decided from one day to another by the politicians,

Tired of the endless rows between politicians, most members of the military tend to think more about their dachas and vegetable plots, the problem of runaway inflation, and how to balance salaries against never-ending price rises. They regard the question of armed intervention in Yugoslavia with indifference, especially as it can only involve a limited contingent a maximum 5,000-10,000

The thoughts of those who might actually take part are perhaps best exemplified by the remark of a paratroop officer: "Better take part in some fighting in Yugoslavia and get paid dollars for it than stay at home getting poorer and poorer and feeling ashamed".

ANDREW MARTOV is the pseudonym of an experienced Russian military commentator, in close touch with feeling the army today.

Certainly, China's pharma-

China Provides Protection for Patent Drugs

cal companies have reacted swiftly to an offer by the Chinese authorities of protection for their drugs against copying by other makers in China.

Early this year, the State Pharmaceutical Administration of China (SPAC) signalled to foreign manufacturers that it was possible for them to seek seven years and six months of administrative protection for new drugs marketed in China, either imported or locally

The swiftest response came from Japan's Takeda Chemical Industries Ltd which filed a patent application on March 2 through Huake Pharmaceutical Intellectual Property Consultative Centre. This is the only authorised bridge agent to be approved by the Office for the

Administrative Protection of Pharmaceuticals (OAPP).

Sandoz AG of Switzerland was second in submitting its application. Ten other pharmaceutical manufacturers from the United States, Japan, Britain, France, Italy and Switzerland also contacted Huake for advice.

"America's Merck and Co Inc still has some suspicion," says Cai Hongqiu, 29, deputy director of Huake. "Merck is a star enterprise with a feature of developing new drugs, and shows much concern for the protection of intellectual property. But Merck has sensed the amazing capacity of Chinese pharmaceutical industries to imitate imported drugs."

Miao Hong writes from Beijing Soon after the protection

offer, Merck conducted an exploratory promotion, and extensive marketing research, Cai says. Hopefully, Marck will apply for patent protection and market its new drugs in China this year.

Before 1992, China's Patent Law only provided protection for the manufacturing technology of a pharmaceutical. Now a maker can seek administrative protection for a pharmaceutical if the product is considered really new, and if it has been granted exclusive rights prohibiting copies within the maker's country between January 1, 1986 and January 1, 1993, says Gao Xiayun, senior

engineer and director of the OAPP. The product must never have been marketed previously in China.

China's revised Patent Law has an additional clause providing 20-year patent protection for a pharmaceutical. Foreign manufacturers can apply for such patent protection with their products within 12 months after they first file for exclusive rights as in their own countries.

The OAPP is in charge of the examination of applications, registration and announcement of administrative protection, issuance of certificates, and settlement of infringement disputes. It takes six months to finish the examination prior to the issue of protective certificates. It is estimated that the total expenditure to obtain the right of administrative protection is

"Clients can reach us for consultations on all aspects," Mr Cai says. "We can help them prepare all documents as quickly as possible."

around US\$9,700.

The protection of pharma ceuticals reflects the new posture of the government in its efforts to perfect the system of intellectual property rights in China. "Our job is a transitional one," Mr Cai says. "It might come to a close early next century."

progress of developing Bang-

enforcers, and anticorruption

ceutical industries must now face the reality of not imitating imported drugs. Foreign manufacturers may earn a great deal if they find the channels to market their new drugs in hospitals. And it may add considerably to the cost of the free medical care system.

In 1992, China signed an understanding memorandum on intellectual property rights with the United States, one segment of which deals with administrative protection of pharmaceuticals. Later, Japan, Sweden and European Community countries joined the US for the same protection.

Now, China has reached agreement on the subject protection of intellectual property with 15 foreign countries.

Depthnews Asia

757 27 37 344

'More on Good Government'

Sir, Mr S M Ali deserves our praise for succinctly spelling out many issues of public administration which are bedeviling the country. Even with the best of rules and fine operating procedures, the administration can be bogged down, if it is not operated sincerely and objectively. 'Justice is blind' and so should be the executive arm of the government. As late as November, 1989 there was a "Public Administration Efficiency Study" report financed by the IDA. It is not understood why further studies have now become necessary. Even with the existing "Rules of Business"

and the "Secretariat Instructions" much can be done to speed up the work of the Government.

The making of Friday as the weekly holiday, was nothing but playing to the gallery, and it had nothing to do with our religious fervour. In the city of Kuala Lumpur public servants of all categories, including the Ministers rush to the Masjid-e-Negara (central mosque) to offer their Friday prayers, and thereafter they are back to their

If we want to be effectively linked with the outside world, we should have Sunday, as our weekly holiday, as before.

Shahabuddin Mahtab Siddheswart Road, Dhaka...

Aids save

Sir, As did the previous governments, the present administration has also satisfied BAC to have been granted aids for FY94, but this time with added conditions.

The routine work of Aid Club has once again developed Bangladesh's confidence in aid to be made available in similar economic position under any government.

Fortunately enough, conditionalities cannot get in her way of accepting aids (of any amount, of any kind, from anywhere), which she can stand up to as boldly as she always overcomes catastrophe.

Bangladesh, a poorest and least developed state, has everything to rejoice her aids with and should beat her possible anxiety under the new strings in the hope of receiving a better deal next time around as well as to improve her government's credibility to stay incumbent.

Now what aid-dependent Bangladesh needs more arc efficient acts in each sphere of her infrastructure, specifically with input cost against output benefit in both educational and professional fields, for attaining self-reliance toward non-LDC status.

Only macro-economic gains cannot guarantee an overall

ladesh which is chronically devastated by Mother Nature along with massive wastes caused by the alleged top to bottom malpractices that cover technocrats, law makers and

personnel

Unless micro-economic approach is preferred sectorwise, a "balanced development" of this LDC will not have been achievable even at a long ranged target, and then she will

only keep her "survival" issue

M Rahman Zila School Road, Mymensingh

BAPA: Investigative reporting Sir, I do not see the necessity

of Bangladesh Airline Pilots Association writing to the Editors of the newspapers, vide one such letter published in The Daily Star (June 10). It is an unnecessary piece of advice. The public have the right to react publicly to a matter of publie interest, whether it be a plane mishap, or investigative reporting involving corruption.

It is only to be hoped BAPA do not intend to discourage investigative reporting - one country - not accustomed to Watergates.

Dhaka

Serious reader