

A View from Srinagar: Hardening of Attitudes

Challenge of Catastrophe for Bangladesh

Predictions about the country's environmental changes in the not so distant a future are grim...

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.

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.

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."

Nor is this problem going to affect Bangladesh alone. Moreover, the undisputed fact that man and only man is responsible for this unprecedented environmental mess points to the need for a global strategy capable of arresting further deterioration of the planet's health.

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.

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.

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.

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.

EVERY 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.

As a 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.

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.

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 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.

Such tragedies, no doubt, openly condemned by the administration, have left a deep mark on the people's minds. But what has caused major resentment is the feeling that every person is taken for a militant until he is cleared.

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.

The custodial deaths in recent 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 pending.

The real battle is being fought on the ground, not in law courts. No doubt, the militancy has lessened. But it has

taken a firmer and more coherent shape. Small groups have more or less ceased functioning. The two organisations which have emerged are the Jammu 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.

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.

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 Rubyia Saidda, daughter of former Home Minister Mufti Mohamed Sayeed, and the killing of Mohammed Sayed Mausudi.

fighting New Delhi. The militancy has, in fact, galvanised the people and they want to administer their affairs in their own way.

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

visited at day time as of Srinagar where I spent five nights.

On the last night of my stay, I drove through parts of Srinagar around 9 pm. The area, wrapped in total silence was deserted. No soldier was on the street. The BSF was encoined in bunkers and militants somewhere else.

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.

In sharp contrast Jammu, the temple town, which I visited on my 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.

Bosnia? Russian Troops are Thinking of their Dachas

Andrew Martov writes from Moscow

REJECTION of the Vance-Owen peace plan by the Bosnian assembly took Russia by surprise and put President Boris Yeltsin in a difficult position.

On one hand, domestic political 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 permanent members of the UN Security Council met (under Russian presidency during May) to discuss territorial details.

On the other hand, Russia, under pressure from Washington, 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.

Two days later an urgent meeting between Grachev and United States President Bill Clinton's ambassador-at-large, Strobe Talbot, led to an accommodation with Washington.

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.



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.

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

Russia has known about international 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 Solnechnogorsk, near Moscow.

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).

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.

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

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.

China Provides Protection for Patent Drugs

Miao Hong writes from Beijing

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 Hongyi, 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."

Soon after the protection offer, Merck conducted an exploratory promotion, and extensive marketing research, Cai says. Hopefully, Merck 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 under 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.

The OAPP is in charge of the examination of applications, registration and announcement of administrative protection, issuance of certificates, and settlement of infringement disputes.

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 within 12 months after they first file for exclusive rights as in their own countries.

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

Certainly, China's pharmaceutical 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.

To the Editor...

'More on Good Government'

Sir, Mr S M Al 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.

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.

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 over-

comes 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 are 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.

progress of developing Bangladesh 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 enforcers, and anticorruption 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 alive.

Only macro-economic gains cannot guarantee an overall

BAPA: Investigative reporting

Sir, I do not see the necessity of Bangladesh Airlines 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 public 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.

Serious reader Dhaka