

Consensus on Flood Control

Flood control is a national issue without a political undertone. Yet, a consensus on this issue remains as distant as ever.

The latest move in the sparrings between the government and environmental, human rights activists come from a threat of legal action against implementation of a FAP component.

The Tangail CPP is one of the FAP's two pilot compartmentalization projects designed to develop procedures for controlled flooding within the command area.

The BELA says that the Tangail CPP would create massive unemployment, cause displacement of people, damage the soil and natural habitat of fish.

Governments usually build roads, bridges, dams and embankments because they consider such projects economically necessary and believe that these would benefit the people at large.

Given these parameters, people's participation and consent are even more crucial to formulation and implementation of projects like the Tangail CPP.

The government, the environmental and human rights activists — all owe it to the nation to reconcile their differences on flood control measures.

Remembering Sher-e-Bangla

Today is the 32nd death anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla (Tiger of Bengal) A K Fazlul Huq. We remember with pride and gratitude the contributions of this unique and courageous patriot who gave us a new sense of pride.

It is not the aim of this editorial to evaluate the deeds of this greatman but to ask the question as to what are we doing to learn from the life, works and thinking of this great leader.

We urge all concerned, especially the government, to do some creative thinking and take some new initiatives so that the nation, especially the present and the future generations can be better informed about what he taught us.

Bangladesh-India Water Dispute: Search for a Solution

by Sayyid A Karim

No less than 90 rounds of meetings have been held so far to resolve the dispute over the sharing of the waters of the Ganges since Bangladesh's liberation.

The situation is bad enough, and it will get progressively worse, as water consumption of both Bangladesh and India goes up inevitably with ever increasing population.

Broadly speaking, there are two ways of resolving disputes: coercive and non-coercive. The coercive way of settlement of a dispute is by using force, or threat of force or by taking such other forceful action as would compel the other party to come to an acceptable agreement.

As the Farakka Barrage was due to be completed in 1975, Sheikh Mujib obtained a commitment from India during his visit to India in May 1974 that the project would not be commissioned until an agreement on the sharing of the Ganges river could be reached.

While an agreement of interim nature was arrived at regarding the allocation of existing flow of the Ganges, there was no agreement on how the flow of the river could be augmented to take care of the growing needs of these waters of both the countries.

Actually, Bangladesh also, if only once, threatened recourse to reprisal against India. This was in 1976, when Rear Admiral M H Khan threatened to retaliate by building a bigger dam further downstream on Bangladesh territory and drown out the Farakka

Barrage, on the analogy of the Aswan High Dam which was built by Egypt with Soviet help, and in the process submerged British-built Aswan dam within Egypt, which was considered outmoded.

The ideal opportunity for solving the Farakka issue was in the years immediately following our independence. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was convinced that a peaceful way could be found to settle the problem on the basis of mutuality of interests of the two countries.

Declaration of the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh and India decided to "establish a Joint Rivers Commission" comprising of experts of both countries on a permanent basis.

As the Farakka Barrage was due to be completed in 1975, Sheikh Mujib obtained a commitment from India during his visit to India in May 1974 that the project would not be commissioned until an agreement on the sharing of the Ganges river could be reached.

While an agreement of interim nature was arrived at regarding the allocation of existing flow of the Ganges, there was no agreement on how the flow of the river could be augmented to take care of the growing needs of these waters of both the countries.

issue of water sharing but also the long-range question of water resource development of the region. Sheikh Mujib was not given the opportunity to settle the problem of the Ganges waters in an amicable spirit with India as he was assassinated by a group of military officers on August 15th.

With the change of government in Bangladesh, India hardened its attitudes and showed no desire to come to early agreement on water-sharing or even to renew the 1975 formula.

It may well be that the decision of Bangladesh to go to the UN may have been prompted by internal political considerations also. Any new regime that comes to power through extra-constitutional

methods inevitably faces the problem of how to gain acceptance among its own people. There was an urgent need to put an end to widespread indiscipline in the army following a turbulent period of coups and countercoups and unify the people behind the martial law regime.

It was only after the electoral defeat of Indira Gandhi's Congress Party in 1977 that the negotiating climate improved. The new coalition Janata Government was more interested than its predecessor in improving relations with its immediate neighbours.

B M Abbas, who as an "expert" played a significant role in shaping the policy on Farakka, has given an account of how the decision was taken to go to the UN.

found that if we were to go the UN this was the last day of making out a move as at least one month's notice was required for the General Assembly which was starting in New York on September 21.

In spite of a high-level and costly lobbying effort in the UN Bangladesh was unable to persuade more than a couple of delegations to speak out in favour of our position.

It was only after the electoral defeat of Indira Gandhi's Congress Party in 1977 that the negotiating climate improved. The new coalition Janata Government was more interested than its predecessor in improving relations with its immediate neighbours.

went directly against the policy of Nixon-Kissinger team, who had tilted towards Pakistan. Blood was recalled in the middle of 1971 and he and his wife, in a long black dress bade a tearful farewell at the old Dhaka airport.

In 1974 when I was Ambassador in Algiers, I was asked to meet Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the London airport, on his way back from Washington.

Richard M Nixon, 37th President of the US, will be remembered for ending the Vietnam war. Watergate has firmly entered the folklore of America and this is associated with Nixon.

Raison d'Etat compels us to express official condolences but raison de coeur forbids us to shed a tear.

Inconsistencies in rates in output, input, goods, anomalies in tariff value higher than world prices lowered the import prices and our plants head towards divorces.

man injustice against human. Long live Mandela and the South African black. Chamaiky Chakma Dhaka University

Dispute" has described the negotiations leading to the agreement under the chapter heading "The Breakthrough".

It is only by results that the validity of a course of action can be judged. Policymakers and so-called experts who have been the architects of our Farakka policy for almost two decades have not been able to deliver the goods promised by them.

Perhaps we can learn from the example of other countries which have managed to resolve the distribution of waters of their common rivers. One does not have to look farther than our own region to find a case

where a constructive solution to the problem of watersharing was achieved because it was handled in a proper way.

The case in point is the Indus river basin, whose unity was disrupted by the partition, of the subcontinent. Pakistan, whose prosperous agricultural economy was dependent on the flow of Indus and its tributaries, was put at the mercy of India.

On the question of Farakka, however, Pakistani leaders did not show any interest in seeking the good offices of the World Bank.

Richard M Nixon, 37th President of the US, will be remembered for ending the Vietnam war. Watergate has firmly entered the folklore of America and this is associated with Nixon.

Raison d'Etat compels us to express official condolences but raison de coeur forbids us to shed a tear.

Inconsistencies in rates in output, input, goods, anomalies in tariff value higher than world prices lowered the import prices and our plants head towards divorces.

man injustice against human. Long live Mandela and the South African black. Chamaiky Chakma Dhaka University

to follow up on the offer made by the World Bank. The explanation is probably to be found in the politico-psychological context of the period.

After the independence of Bangladesh a dialogue with India was initiated at a high political level for the first time since India proposed the construction of the Farakka Barrage in 1941.

Be that as it may, the Farakka issue is much too important a matter to play politics with. Instead of refusing to entertain the proposal put forward by the other side, attempts must be made to find a middle way and some sort of a compromise.

The author was the first Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to United Nations after its admission to the body, in 1974. From 1978 he served in the UN Department of Technical Cooperation as Interregional Adviser for five years. He now resides in New York from where he contributed this article.

Richard M Nixon

by Arshad-uz Zaman

Richard M Nixon, the 37th President of the USA was no ordinary mortal. His eventual career, which was all politics, had many ups and downs more than ups.

Nixon first arrived on the political stage as a Congressman from his native California in the early fifties. He made quite a name for his uncompromising pursuit of left wingers and Communists of all stripes.

In 1960 elections Nixon was pitted against a far less known challenger young, dynamic John F. Kennedy. It was a fierce election battle and for the first time the two contenders faced each other in nationally televised debate.

Nixon was not going to give

up for he was the truly professional politician. This may have been his undoing for the American suffers a near allergy about professional politicians and this must be one reason why Nixon never won the hearts and minds of his compatriots.

In 1962 Nixon fought for the post of Governor of his native California and lost. Nixon by now had become the target of attacks, often harsh of the American powerful media.

1971 was the greatest year for the Bengalis for the entire nation had risen as one man in a War of Liberation. I remember those days well. I was posted in Dhaka as Director of Public Relations of the Government of East Pakistan and since I had served in many large capitals of the world, I maintained personal friendship with the diplomatic corps here.

We in Bangladesh have special reason to remember Nixon, although not particularly fondly. Secretive Nixon-Kissinger team was plotting

establishing relations with China. Pakistan, a long time ally of the US had a pivotal role. Kissinger came to Pakistan in 1971 and an elaborate ruse was set up in Murree, while Kissinger flew secretly to China to negotiate establishment of diplomatic relations.

man injustice against human. Long live Mandela and the South African black. Chamaiky Chakma Dhaka University

Mandela and the right of the black

Sir, South Africa is holding its first ever non-racial election and the world is about to land its last blow against racial discrimination. The black had suffered so much to get their right. We also know about Mahatma Gandhi's experiences in South Africa one of which is when he rode a VIP train, he was abused for being coloured.

Domestic industrial units

Sir, One of the evils of quick trade liberalisation moves with no prior home work is "invasion" of our markets by inferior goods devoid of standardisation and QC rules.

OPINION 'End of a Statesman of Peace'

Shah A M S Kibria

Speak no ill of a dead man, that is what we are taught as good manners. Indeed it is customary to eulogize a person when he dies. Yet I was surprised and disappointed to read your editorial of April 25, 1994 on late President Nixon.

Nixon will no doubt be evaluated by the American people for the degree of success achieved by him as their President. He will also be judged by history for his global role. But how can the people of Bangladesh ever forget the role that he played during their Liberation Struggle? Nixon did not support the aspiration of the people of this country for independence.

I wish you editorial had touched on this issue, even briefly, because there are efforts under way in Bangladesh today to distort the history of our Liberation struggle and your editorial may have indirectly and unwittingly contributed to the distortion. I have chosen to write this piece because I hold the Daily Star in such high esteem.