

People

AFTER his near-brush with death, **Kanak Dixit**, publisher of Nepal's most popular fortnightly newsmagazine *Himal*, is making good progress and is fully alert and in high spirits at a hospital in Kathmandu. "It is a miracle he survived," said noted neurosurgeon Dr Upendra Devkota. Dixit is not receiving visitors, but is expected to be discharged for further recuperation at home soon. Dixit dislocated two thoracic vertebrae and had scalp injuries in a fall while trekking from Jomsom to Pokhara along a trail above the Marsyangdi River in Lamjung district last week. Three rescuers, including Kunda Dixit, Kanak's elder brother, plucked the missing trekker from a perpendicular ledge overlooking the swift flowing river on August 23. Unable to crawl back, Kanak anchored himself to a ledge to prevent a further fall into the river and survived for three days and three nights on rain water; he lost his rucksack in a 50 feet tumble.

Dharmasiri Senanayake, minister of Sri Lanka's Aviation and Tourism ministry, died at the age of 67; he was a bachelor.

Dr. V. K. Bahuguna, Indian Forest Service Officer, received the Queen's award by the Commonwealth Forestry Association, for his role as administrator, teacher and researcher in the field.

Dilip Kumar, Indian film star to receive the Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana award. The award is being given for promoting the cause of communal harmony and national integration.

Khawaja Shong, well-known Pakistani poet has been selected for the Makhdoom award, for his outstanding contribution to Urdu poetry.

The Buzz...

Bangaru Laxman, New BJP chief: "... this distance has not helped either our Muslim brethren or our party. Above all, it has not helped India and her democracy... Muslims are the flesh of our flesh and the blood of our blood."

Amitabh Bachchan, on his participation in the TV programme, *Kaun Banega Karopati*, "This is unique. I am not acting. I am playing myself."

Gen. (Rtd) Hameed Gul, former head of the Inter Services Intelligence Pakistan: "Nawaz Sharif did not behave like an honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan during the Kargil conflict."

Javed Jabbar, Pak Federal Information Minister: "Chief Executive Gen. Pervez Musharraf was sincere to resolve masses' problems. The government would eliminate corruption from politics and corrupt politicians would never be allowed to come in power at any cost."

Syed Shahiduzzaman, Hizbul supremo: "Until Indians come forward for meaningful talks that include Pakistan, the Mujahideen will continue its activities in Kashmir."

Khaleda Zia, BNP Chairperson: "We believe in rule of law... We have total respect for law and confidence on court. Law should be allowed to take its own course if any one commits any crime or does any corruption."

Confidence-building

The Line under Control?

By Mansoor Mamoon

ALL and sundry now equally maintain that South Asia has now emerged as the largest flash-point and trouble spot in the world with the look of a veritable simmering cauldron. This was mainly due to the intense hostility and rivalry between India and Pakistan. The Indian ambition for a major power role in the region and Pakistan's frantic search for parity with India not only contributed to the involvement of extra-regional powers in South Asia, but also fuelled the continued arms race. The fall-out of this deadly phenomenon is being felt among the smaller neighbours like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives in one way or the other. In their frenzy of acquiring arms superiority both India and Pakistan have already acquired nuclear capability.

According to an authority on South Asia, Ruth Leger Sivard out of 2.4 million dead from four wars and several sporadic violence in South Asia in the past, only 0.54 million had been war dead and the rest 1.86 million were massacred during ethno-political violence between 1947-1989. Among the third world countries South Asia is the largest arms importer. The region, mainly India and Pakistan spends over twenty billion US dollar each year on arms build up. The defence budgets of both the countries

are continuously registering upward swings to the detriment of peace and stability in the entire region thereby presenting the biggest paradox and the starker irony in the contemporary history. This huge spending on stock piling of arsenals is occurring at a time when three hundred million people of the region have no access to fresh drinking water and about five hundred million are mired in absolute poverty.

After their brief encounter in Kargil in 1999 and the subsequent hijacking to Kandahar of an Indian airliner there is little doubt that relations between India and Pakistan have never been as bad as they are today and the two countries are moving endlessly towards the direction of sinking their relations further to the depths that have never fathomed before. The mood in Delhi and Islamabad centring their bone of contention Kashmir is the harshest so far and yet another conventional warfare between the two in the near future has not been ruled out by analysts. International pressure, mainly from the US which for strategic reasons is rather keen to play the role of a mediator, failed to melt the glacier and bring about a thaw between the two traditional rivals. India under the administration of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is pursuing what it calls the Doctrine of Limited War (enunciated by Defence Minister George Fernandes) vis-à-vis Pakistani incursions and felling of insurgency in Kashmir.

At the recently concluded

Nagpur convention of the ruling BJP strong demands were voiced for more drastic action on the part of the Indian government to strike the Mujahideen bases across the Line Of Control (LoC) in the valley of Kashmir to eliminate the sanctuaries in Pakistan administered area. General Musharraf, the military ruler in Pakistan, has given the equally stern warning that in the event of such an action India would be taught a good lesson. Such a situation will lead to armageddon in which the entire fabric of South Asia will not only be destroyed but will also cost uncountable human lives. What is more disheartening is that at the Nagpur convention the Indian government's stand of no dialogue with Pakistani till what it claims as military junta stops aiding and abetting the Kashmiri militants has received overwhelming support. This portends danger. Former diplomat and a member of the opposition Congress (Sonia) Working Committee K Natwar Singh views the current deterioration of India's relations with Pakistan as in the right direction. In response to General Pervez Musharraf's desire, Sheikh Hasina has given her consent for a summit level meeting with him in New York during the millennium meet of the United Nations in early September this year.

She is also scheduled to meet Vajpayee separately. Bangladesh had pioneered the formation of Saarc. With Sheikh Hasina as the Prime Minister Bangladesh can once again take the lead in resurrecting Saarc from its hibernation and reactivate it. An atmosphere of peace and stability in the region is of utmost importance at this crucial juncture when things are gradually turning worse. The holding of the postponed (at the desire of India) summit of Saarc has, thus, become imperative. Except India, the other six members are in full tandem on the need for immediate holding of the summit. They can exert pressure on India to give up its bellicosity and once again revert to bilateralism as regards its approach towards Pakistan.

The panacea lies not in the Doctrine of Limited War of George Fernandes but in the Gujral Doctrine of good neighbourliness. Only through this an attempt at confidence-building in the subcontinent can once again be initiated. The initiative should have come from India, as it is the largest among the south Asian nations. But since the VJP-led NDA government is palpably lacking in this endeavour the other six countries should through their respective as well as collective diplomatic channels convince India of the need for a summit level meeting by way of fresh confidence building in the region for ensuring peace and stability. They can count on the increasing support of the civil society in India which is strongly for such a move.

In the eighties when Jammu and Kashmir issue started flaring up in its present form former Indian Prime Minister V P Singh had openly declared in the lower house of Indian parliament that the solution of the

neighbourhood and the emergence of superpower (US) tutelage. He called for unfreezing the situation by talking directly to Pakistan.

Inside India there is a growing demand among the exponents of civil society to pursue the Gujral doctrine which emphasised good neighbourly relations all its neighbours including Pakistan for creating a congenial environment of bilateralism. The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (Saarc) was formed in the early eighties for creating an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation instead of hostility and hatred, among the seven member-countries has been pushed into backward due mainly to Indian obduracy and intransigence. This big brotherly attitude on the part of Delhi has put an abrupt brake to the progress of the structured cooperative spirit in South Asia with the result that the region has now no regionalism. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent overtures to Pakistan is in the right direction. In response to General Pervez Musharraf's desire, Sheikh Hasina has given her consent for a summit level meeting with him in New York during the millennium meet of the United Nations in early September this year.

She is also scheduled to meet Vajpayee separately. Bangladesh had pioneered the formation of Saarc. With Sheikh Hasina as the Prime Minister Bangladesh can once again take the lead in resurrecting Saarc from its hibernation and reactivate it. An atmosphere of peace and stability in the region is of utmost importance at this crucial juncture when things are gradually turning worse. The holding of the postponed (at the desire of India) summit of Saarc has, thus, become imperative. Except India, the other six members are in full tandem on the need for immediate holding of the summit. They can exert pressure on India to give up its bellicosity and once again revert to bilateralism as regards its approach towards Pakistan.

The panacea lies not in the Doctrine of Limited War of George Fernandes but in the Gujral Doctrine of good neighbourliness. Only through this an attempt at confidence-building in the subcontinent can once again be initiated. The initiative should have come from India, as it is the largest among the south Asian nations. But since the VJP-led NDA government is palpably lacking in this endeavour the other six countries should through their respective as well as collective diplomatic channels convince India of the need for a summit level meeting by way of fresh confidence building in the region for ensuring peace and stability. They can count on the increasing support of the civil society in India which is strongly for such a move.

In the eighties when Jammu and Kashmir issue started flaring up in its present form former Indian Prime Minister V P Singh had openly declared in the lower house of Indian parliament that the solution of the

"Pakistan is the most reluctant nuclear power to have disclosed its cards. It is a reactive power to whatever India does. Because it knows that in the long run, it can't compete with India. They have said they will not deploy if India does not. And if India agrees to sign the CTBT, it will follow suit."

Now, has India gained anything from nuclear tests?

Says Amartya Sen, "It could not be claimed that India benefited from the 1998 blasts of Pokhran-II, not to mention the well-being of the people, even the strategic goals of the government of India could not have been well served. This was true in the context of India's standing vis-à-vis both Pakistan and China."

India and Pakistan consider that signing the CTBT is not a priority issue. Especially because a national consensus in both countries on the issue has yet to be evolved. They are always talking on two points.

Firstly, the CTBT will take effect only after all 44 countries on the essential list have signed and ratified it. With the US Senate having refused to ratify it, there is no chance of the treaty being enforced for several years. Consequently, India and

Pakistan has been fulfilling its obligations.

Like Pervez Hoodbhoy says in one of his articles: "The Nawaz government is a clear winner and Chaghi was godsend to cover up its misdeeds in all that really matters: economy, governance, law-and-order, education, and health. Hence the need to stoke the fires of nationalist frenzy, without assuming any of its obliga-

tions. Secondly, only 26 countries out of 41 signatories have ratified it.

So, these two countries too are delaying ratification.

According to Bharat Srinivasan of Columbia University, the total cost of the Indian nuclear programme in 1998 currency terms to be between \$48 billion to \$72 billion. That's a lot of money, which could certainly be used in the country's anti-poverty programmes. Defence spending on conventional arms also has risen in both countries since last May, and is still rising.

It's time for both India and Pakistan to ask themselves some questions: who benefits from their nuclearisation programmes? Who will they use these weapons against? Why are they making this subcontinent a hot bed of extreme rivalry? It's time for them to make a tally of the gains and losses, to separate winners and losers.

Like Pervez Hoodbhoy says in one of his articles: "The Nawaz government is a clear winner and Chaghi was godsend to cover up its misdeeds in all that really matters: economy, governance, law-and-order, education, and health. Hence the need to stoke the fires of nationalist frenzy, without assuming any of its obliga-

tions. Secondly, only 26 countries out of 41 signatories have ratified it.

So, these two countries too are delaying ratification.

According to Bharat Srinivasan of Columbia University, the total cost of the Indian nuclear programme in 1998 currency terms to be between \$48 billion to \$72 billion. That's a lot of money, which could certainly be used in the country's anti-poverty programmes. Defence spending on conventional arms also has risen in both countries since last May, and is still rising.

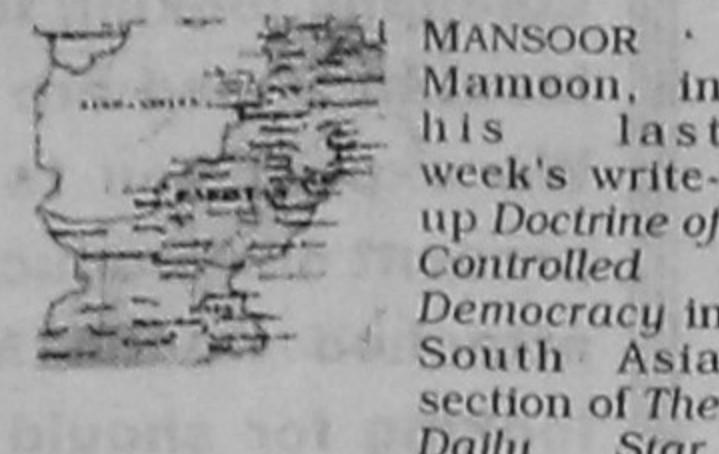
It's time for both India and Pakistan to ask themselves some questions: who benefits from their nuclearisation programmes? Who will they use these weapons against? Why are they making this subcontinent a hot bed of extreme rivalry? It's time for them to make a tally of the gains and losses, to separate winners and losers.

Like Pervez Hoodbhoy says in one of his articles: "The Nawaz government is a clear winner and Chaghi was godsend to cover up its misdeeds in all that really matters: economy, governance, law-and-order, education, and health. Hence the need to stoke the fires of nationalist frenzy, without assuming any of its obliga-

Pakistan

Weak Pillars of Democracy

By Navine Murshid



MANSOOR MAMOON, in his last week's write-up *Doctrine of Controlled Democracy in South Asia* section of *The Daily Star*,

has aptly said that "Pakistan is seemingly a vicious trap and conundrum of authoritarian rule and under the tentacle of army with democracy remaining as elusive as it had been in the past."

Democracy is important for the country. But all indications say that General Pervez Musharraf will follow the footsteps of his predecessors -- Ayub Khan and Ziaul Haq and is likely to stay in power longer than is expected even after Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon's push for restoration of democracy in that country. Musharraf has already mapped out his strategy when he said that he would introduce new brand of politics -- genuine democracy -- where the tested politicians, who were in power in the past, would have no place. What may be opportune he may also assume, like his predecessors probably, a quasi-civilian coating for legalising his regime, form his own band of political party and handpick persons loyal to him.

This gives a depressing political culture as far as democracy is concerned.

Political culture and conduct are products of social milieu which strengthen with the democratic movement and time. A broad-based and well-organised political party usually serves as a mediator between the social thought and the political action. When it comes to power, it works as a bridge between the society and the state. It is commonly said military coups in Pakistan are because of the failure of democracy and democracy fails be-

cause of weak and corrupt party system.

When Pakistan became independent, say historians, Muslim League started losing its influence and grip and was involved in treacherous and military policymaking. In 1954, the Muslim League suffered a crushing defeat in erstwhile East Pakistan provisional election and was reduced in former western wing. Even in former West Pakistan, Muslim League did not sustain itself as a major political party, due to the several greedy politicians and puritans. On the other hand, the then East Pakistan formed its own party Awami League under the leadership of H S Suhrawardy.

In 1967, Pakistan People's Party was formed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, which emerged as the single largest party with Bangladesh, and military rule came to an end - temporarily.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the new president, introducing a new constitution which came into effect in 1973. But after elections in 1977, the opposition challenged Bhutto's victory and widespread riots ensued. Failure to reach a reconciliation with the army chief of staff, Ziaul Haq, to depose Bhutto in a military coup and declare martial law. This remained in force until 1985.

Despite the subsequent return to civilian government, the politics of Pakistan has remained closely linked to the military. Now the army's actions appear to herald an end to what has been the longest period in Pakistan's turbulent history in which the military has remained on the sidelines.

The influence of feudal and power-hungry people destroyed the party and ruined the so-called political values in that country. So when a military man Ziaul Haq became Bhutto, the party was not in the position to resist. In April 1979, Bhutto was executed and his party showed no signs of life. After a decade, when his daughter Benazir Bhutto became the Prime Minister after

1988 election, she herself was not able to 'clean' the party and did not pay any attention to party re-organisation, thus depended upon other levers of power.

Eventually, Benazir became the victim of the 8th Amendment to the 1973 Constitution, which was Ziaul Haq's *quid pro quo* for lifting the martial law.

Zia himself used it against Junaid, the prime minister of his choice and dissolved the very National Assembly which had passed it. Two years later, in August 1990, it was used by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan against Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and then again against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in April 1993, while they both commanded the support of the majority in the National Assembly.

The arrival of Nawaz Sharif, though in a way was able to revive the popularity of Muslim League who has been split up into various sections. However, the imbalances within the League remain there and he was not able to convey a transparent political system within the country.

Despite being the popular leaders of their time, neither Benazir Bhutto nor Nawaz Sharif made any attempt to strengthen their respective political parties. In fact, they neglected their parties throughout their tenures as prime ministers. They did not realise that the strong party is basic to the parliamentary system of democracy.

Parliamentary democracy in Pakistan has repeatedly failed only because its political leaders have not been able to build up well-organised and strong political parties. Given the performances of the weak pillars of democracy can one blame army? And what would happen when democracy returns to Pakistan in the same way it did in the past? It's the same old story...

The Region This Week

No "child soldier"

MAOIST rebels in Nepal have denied allegations from the government and human rights groups that they recruit child soldiers. The leader of the underground Maoist Communist Party, known as Prachanda, said the group had a policy of dissuading children from joining their ranks. The government has accused the rebels of abducting children and forcing them into their armed movement.

Calls for aid

THE chief minister of the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh is calling on central government to help meet the cost of dealing with the devastating floods. The deluge, described by Chandrababu Naidu as an unprecedented calamity for his state, has so far claimed more than 120 lives.

Mori ends Nepal visit

JAPAN'S Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori assured Nepal of continued economic cooperation and lobbied for his country's agenda for reforming the United Nations, especially expanding the membership of the Security Council. Though no major aid commitments were made Japan has agreed to look into Nepal's proposals for projects on river management, community bridges and an additional highway linking Kathmandu with the Tarai, Nepal and Japanese officials said. Mori sought support for reforming the UN, particularly articulation of the need in the official speech Nepal would make when the world body meets for its Millennium Summit on September 6-8 in New York.

Dynasty Expands



A baby boy for Robert Vadra and Priyanka Gandhi. The daughter of Indian opposition leader Sonia Gandhi, has given birth to a son, adding another generation to the country's most famous political dynasty. The boy was born at the Sri Ganga Ram hospital in Delhi. "Priyanka Gandhi Vadra gave birth to a healthy boy weighing 2.76 kilograms (6.07 pounds) ...," a doctor at the Sri Ganga Ram hospital in Delhi said, adding that the baby was delivered by caesarean section.

Pakistan expels Indian diplomat

PAKISTAN has ordered the expulsion of an Indian diplomat in Islamabad just two days after a Pakistani official at the high commission in Delhi was expelled. Pakistan said the Indian official P.C. Dey, had engaged in what it called activities incompatible with his official status - a term normally used to mean spying. He has been given a week to leave the country. India gave the same reason when it ordered the expulsion of the Pakistani high commission official Malik Mohammad Rafique, from Delhi.

Furious over Olympic 'snub'

THE Taliban's unrecognised Olympic committee has reacted furiously to the withdrawal of accreditation for two Afghan observers to go to the Sydney Olympics. Afghanistan will be the only nation with no athletes at Sydney, because the International Community does not recognise the Taliban Government. A week ago the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said two officials could go as observers.

Blamed for killing trekkers

A Spanish woman and her teenage son have been killed by a group of bandits while trekking in the Himalayan mountain foothills in northern India. Maria Angeles Girones, 34, and her son Cristobal, 14, both from Valencia, were apparently murdered while camping in the remote Parvati valley. Martin Young, 32, a British man believed to be Girones' boyfriend, was also seriously wounded in the attack.