forced countries like Iran and North

Korea to step up their missile

programme. The US emphasis on

the variants of the starwars con-

cepts, particularly the National

Missile Defence (NMD) and Theatre

DHAKA MONDAY MARCH 12, 2001

Chief Whip's son again

Where is rule of law?

hat a way for the Chief Whip to greet his Prime Minister. His son's criminal act, once again, is splashed on the front pages of national dailies embarrassing the government and especially Sheikh Hasina as he happens to be her first cousin. In his latest act Sadeq Abdullah, by now infamous son of the Chief Whip, chased a jeep carrying a mother, her two daughters and two grand daughters, and fired several shots at them breaking the front wind shield in order to stop the vehicle. The frightened driver of the jeep drove from Gulshan into Dhaka Cantonment and sought the help of the military police on duty who saved them. Sadeq Abdullah was arrested along with his accomplices and handed over to the Gulshan police. Here the criminal act ends and the power play starts. On hearing about the arrest of the Chief Whip's son a powerful quarter forced the victims and her family to "compromise" and withdraw their FIR filed with the Gulshan thana. After arresting Sadeq and his gang with weapons(claimed to be licensed) and with all the physical evidence that the family of three women and two children travelling in the jeep were fired upon, the Gulshan thana released them on the pretext that parties concerned had reached a 'compromise.' Clearly a crime was committed on the streets. A jeep carrying three women and two children was fired upon, chased and again fired upon (bullet marks are there to prove how many shots were fired). Military police arrested and handed the culprits to the thana where they were arrested on the charge of attempted kidnapping. Then the victims were forced to withdraw the charges and the criminals were allowed to go free. Why? Because he was the Chief Whip's son.

The PM never tires of claiming that nobody is above the law. If that is the case then how can the police release someone who admits to having fired at a jeep carrying women and children at the dead of night. If we follow Sadeq's story, just because a jeep hit him, does it give him the 'right' to shoot at them? Then again what does a compromise have to do with a criminal act? From Sadeq's case it means that someone can steal, attack, vandalise, assault or fire at someone else and then the criminal goes free because a 'compromise' is reached between parties concerned under pressure. Is this the new definition of rule of law we now have to live with?

The PM proudly says that she does not spare her relatives when it comes to crime. In that case why is Sadeq out in the streets? Shouldn't he have been in jail for the numerous other crimes he has been accused of? Some reports suggest that the matter has been, or will be, brought to the PM's notice, implying that if she okays then further action will be taken against Sadeq. We also saw the same thing in the case of state minister Maya's son and some others. The very fact that it has to go up to her level before police action is taken against ruling party high ups proves that not everybody is same before the eye of the law.

Development of Agni II: India's strategic milestone



BRIG (RTD) M ABDUL HAFIZ

AST January on the seventeenth of the month the moods were celebratory at the India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as the Agni II Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) designed by it took off from its mobile rail-Launcher, covered more than 2000 km in less than eleven minutes and homed in accurately on its designated target in the Bay of Bengal. India's missile scientists and technologists responsible for the text book perfection of the Agni II testiflight with an entirely indigenous know how were justly proud of the milestone achie-vement. After having overcome the short-comings observed in earlier tests since 1989, the Agni was now finally 'operationalised' to a point where India's Defence Minister George Fernandez could call it a 'huge success' and announce its induction as a major strategic delivery system in Indian Army. India, as a result, has manifestly entered the IRMB system. Given the technological status of its space programme in developing the technologies of 'Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) India is well poised to proceed to the next goal of achieving Inter Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capability. There are reports that the work on an ICBM 'Surya' with a range of 5000 km is in an advanced stage'

However, the significance of successful testifying of the Agni II lies in the fact that India has now developed a 'credible minimum nuclear deterrence' the cornerstone of India's draft nuclear doc-

The timings for the test could not be more sensitive when Chinese leader Li Peng was still visiting India. In south Asia itself, a fragile peace process between the region's two arch rivals was underway. Yet when the Agni II was test fired it only evoked mild criticisms from some prominent anti-proliferation states and the missile was curiously dubbed as mere technology demonstrator. While the US administration

was in the final stage of its transition,

the response from the P-5 to Indian

race. A statement from Japanese Foreign Ministry said that it "was strongly concerned about the launch of Agni II"

Obviously, Pakistan characterised the testing of Agni II as a direct threat to its security. According to Pakistan's Foreign Office, Agni II firing was part of India's ambitious nuclear and missile programme and thus a matter of concern for international community. The government of Pakistan once again reiterated the proposal for a strategic restraint regime to promote nuclear and

moment Pakistani reaction remains remarkably cool as exemplified by an interview of general Pervez Musharaf who said that the testing of Agni II should not be hurdle in the ongoing moves to encourage a dialogue to establish peace in

Kashmir. Even if Pakistan pretends to be unperturbed in the face of the threats posed to it by Agni II, it can not but recognise that Agni II greatly adds to India's second strike capability from deep inside the country. It

Missile Defence (TMD) have already fuelled the drive for the modernisation and upgradation of the capabilities of countries like Russia and China. In late 1999 and early 2000, Russia test fired or deployed several missiles to register a robust response to what was perceived as a worsening security environment China is believed to have invested in the ICBM Dong Feng-5, the Three-stage mobile ICBM DF-31 with multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles and other submarine launched missile. Against this back drop.

India's technological momentum

would ensure both India's credible

deference as well as greatly

enhanced regional force projection.

She will continue to consolidate her

acquisition in missilogy.

By disputing the Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty of 1972 which was the basis of all arms control agreements, Washington has already put a question mark before the entire regime of disarmament. It is reviving a hierarchical culture of dominance in which an emerging actor like India, a possible pole in a future multipolar world, would continue to place increasing reliance on nuclear capability as instrument of power and influence. The operationalisation of Agni II as a major milestone in the context of growing anarchy in global disarmament provides India an opportunity to peg its nuclear capability at a high level from where she can be hardly

PERSPECTIVES

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trine. The Agni II will constitute an important part of the triad of Land, sea and air Launched missile system. While the five nuclear tests in May 1998 at Pokhran demonstrated India's capability to build a range of nuclear devices the success of Agni II which 'has gone through all qualifications' firms up the country's ability to assemble the delivery systems for its nuclear warheads. Agni II a surface to surface missile will be part of India's land-based nuclear deterrent and is capable of carrying nuclear warheads and hitting targets deep within China and Pakistan countries with whom India is now engaged in reconstructing its

missile remained almost muted. For instance, the statement from French Foreign office only reaffirmed its "support for the initiative pursued in the context of efforts against ballistic proliferation". China merely warned India and Pakistan against entering into a missile race. There was no direct criticism of India's missile tests. On the contrary, India's anti-China lobby blamed China for missile proliferation by providing technical assistance to Iran and Pakistan. The most open criticism of the Indian missile test came from Japan who worried that missile proliferation in South Asia many encourage its neighbours, North and South Korea to go in for an arms

conventional stabilisation and to string them peace and stability on South Asia. Although Pakistan succeeded in restraining the kneeierk demand for an immediate counter-demonstration of Pakistan's capability, the reports from Islamabad suggest that Pakistan may be preparing to test-fire a series of new missile capable of carrying nuclear war heads ostensibly to counter Agni II. The missiles likely to be test fired are Shaheen II with a range of 2500 km and Haider-I with shorter range of 350km. By all appearance, both India and Pakistan have now proceeded to the next level of their nuclear programme by deploying warheads

strike by Prithhvi missile and frontline aircraft's to cripple, at the outset, Pakistan's strategic forces. It anything, it does confront Pakistani planners with a dilemma on the nature of response to such strike. Pakistan's choice will be compounded with further escalation of the nuclear capable missile development programme of India.

provides a protective umbrella to a

possible conventional pre-emptive

At this Juncture, India's missile proliferation is rather unstoppable not only because the missile control regime itself is in tatter, the global trend is also a pointer to growing proliferation. The post-gulf war international order has already

UN chief in South Asia



ZAGLUL AHMED CHOWDHURY

NITED Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan is currently on a visit to four South Asian nations. He has been to Pakistan on the first leg of the trip. Three other countries that he is visiting are Bangladesh, Nepal and India. This is Annan's first visit to this region and is taking place in the last year of his five-year term as the UN chief. Annan's visit has something in common with the visit of former United States President Bill Clinton, who also chose to visit South Asia in the last year of his eight-year tenure as chief executive of the most powerful country of the world.

However. Clinton's visit was to take place earlier but was delayed by the nuclear detonation by India and Pakistan in May 1998. Clinton said his planned visit was thwarted by the atomic explosions by two South Asian nations as Washington is totally opposed to nuclear proliferation.

The trip finally came through and for Bangladesh, it was the first ever visit by an American president. Earlier in 1994, Clinton's wife, the then first lady Hillary Clinon, now a Senator, paid a visit to this region and was also in Bangladesh during

When key international figures pay such visits to developing nations and more particularly like those of South Asia, these countries receive global attention. In the process, countries visited by important persons stand benefited on some constructive counts. On the other hand, these leaders themselves feel satisfied for having made trips to a region which has nearly one-fifth of the mankind. Otherwise too, South Asia enjoys

several global trouble spots in the manner many had expected it.

Nonetheless, he has done a good work if not "excellent", given the limitations that the UN suffers in many areas thanks to the countries which enjoy the "veto" power. He sought to broker peace in several conflicts and had both success and failure. It is a height of folly to expect that UN would succeed in all its efforts because of the constraints it experiences. What is important is that whether the UN position since U Thant of Burma (presently Myanmar)

Any support for Kofi Annan from South Asia for his second term is relevant if not important. The Asian members are yet to reach a consensus about their candidate. It is also not clear whether they would stake the claim unhesitatingly. Still, it is a possibility and there is nothing unusual if the incumbent secretary general seeks to feel the pulse of four South Asian nations on the issue. All these four countries are

nations of the region are not responsible for this

Annan's parleys in both Islamabad and New Delhi would cover this critical issue along with other matters like reducing tensions between the two countries. The UN chief will also discuss Pakistan's chances of its early return to democracy and will urge General Pervez Musharraf to abide by the Supreme Court ruling and his own subsequent promise that a civilian government will take over

exhort upon all the contending sides to heed to the need for tolerance and abhorrence to violence. He will also have other engagements. Bangladesh is a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council and this adds to its importance.

Nepal, to a certain extent, is in the midst of political instability as the present government is not stable enough and is also occasionally treated by ultra-leftist Maoists. Annan may urge the political parties there and the extremists to be governed by democratic principles so that the new-found democracy is strengthene.

In India, Annan's talks wilinclude primarily the Indo-Pakistan tensions with special reference to the Kashmir situation. New Delhi does not want any third-party mediation on the issue but may not be averse to any talks on the matter. India is the largest nation in the region and has also a say in the world affairs. New Delhi is also keen to become a permanent member of the UNSC like that of Japan or Germany if the present pattern of the UN system is restructured. This issue may come up in India although decisions on such important matters rest with the members of the world body and more with the five permanent

members. Kofi Annan's trip to South Asia is important in many ways. It is taking

MATTERS AROUND US

Kofi Annan's trip to South Asia is important in many ways. It is taking place against the backdrop of a change of administration in the US. The US is the only super-power of the world and enjoys tremendous clout in the world body. Annan's talks will cover matters of mutual interests on bilateral, regional and international plane with leaders of all four countries.

certain attraction despite the fact that problems in the socioeconomic areas galore here while the political tensions always feature in discussions at global stage.

Annan hails from Ghana and cceeded another African as the secretary general of the UN Dr Boutros Boutros Ghali of Egypt. Ghali served one term at the UN and was practically denied another when the US which has a "big say" in the appointment of the coveted position was unwilling to support Ghali, a former deputy prime minister of Egypt, for a second term.

So far, the record of Annan has been quite impressive when it comes to his handling of issues related to world peace notwithstanding the fact that the world body has not been able to act on strives to play its role in conformity with its noble charter to promote peace and stability. If there is no slackening in its drive, then one may reasonably be satisfied with its performance while the record is obviously likely to be a combination of both glory and dismay.

It is possible that Annan is seeking support of the countries of this region for a second term. Strictly speaking, these countries like bulk of the members of the UN do not matter much in the process of choosing a secretary general, as it is an accepted truth that the views of "some" matter for all practical purposes. But this time there is a chance that Asian nations may put up a candidate for the top position of the world body as they did not have any to this crucially important playing a commendable role in the UN peace keeping operations in difficult conflict zones by significantly contributing their troops. South Asia too is an interna-

tional flash-point because of rivalry between two nuclear powers India and Pakistan. The enmity of the two neighbours acquired a new dangerous dimension from May 1998 when both became atomic weapons-states. What is worse, both said they would not hesitate to use the dangerous weapons in case of any serious conflict although both, not unexpectedly, said the other side would be responsible for the situation. Nuclear non-proliferation is an avowed objective of the UN for the purpose of creating a safer world but South Asia scuttles this goal to an extent although other

by October following elections Afghan situation, Osama Bin

Laden issue and Taleban government's current drive to demolish non-Islamic treasures are likely to be discussed in Islamabad. Pakistan is known to be close to the Taleban regime which controls 95 per cent of the country whereas the UN still recognises the ousted Burhanuddin Rabbani regime.His talks in Bangladesh and Nepal will include, among others, the flourishing of democracy. For Bangladesh, this is an election year and latest political situation indicates that the polls would be held earlier than the schedule. There is no denying that spectres of violence and uncertainty centring the elections haunt the nation. Annan is expected to

place against the backdrop of a change of administration in the US. The US is the only super-power of the world and enjoys tremendous clout in the world body. Annan's talks will cover matters of mutual interests on bilateral, regional and international plane with leaders of

THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR **TO THE**

No More Empty Words Your courageous editorial of

February 18, "No more empty words; Put them behind bars" was timely. Our Prime Minister is now undisputedly the most powerful person in this country and her words are more or less law. How is it then that her instructions so widely publicised through the media to arrest forthwith all those who violate the law, irrespective of their party affiliations, have been and continue to be flouted by the law enforcing authorities? Is there a catch between her words and her deeds or does she really mean what she says?

It is sometimes reported that the police are often obstructed by influential quarters in the ruling party, from taking appropriate action against many known criminals and terrorists. Are these so-called influential quarters more powerful than our Hon'ble Prime Minister herself? In the public interest and above the interest of her petty followers, will the Prime Minister rise to the occasion and firmly tells the lawenforcing authorities that she means

A Qayyum

An appeal to doctors

Doctors are supposed to be committed to humanitarian needs. It is unfortunate that some doctors have become more interested in earning money than in taking care of their

patients. There are exceptions, of course, but quality care is lacking. Examinations are cursory, superficial and sometimes fail to diagnose the patient's illness correctly, leading to terrible consequences for the patient. Doctors treat patients in the nost callous manner sometimes.

This is why many people go to India or other neighbouring countries for medical treatment . People have lost faith in our doctors. I would appeal to all doctors to do something to change this unfortunate trend.

Saifullah. BUET, Dhaka

Cause for shame

I would like to congratulate Shamim Ansary Sumon for writing the letter "Cause for shame" published in these columns on January 28th. The student expresses a sense of shame that our 'fellow humans' carry out inhuman and barbaric acts of cruelty and oppression against women. If there were more like Mr Shamim, and if more people felt a greater sense of shame and outrage, our society would benefit immensely. Shameful acts would be condemned and people would be deterred from carrying them out. Even if the majority does not change, a sense of shame in the hearts of a few moral giants would be enough to deter the wrong-doers.

MAS Molla Member, BAAS, Dhaka.

PHOTORIAL

Readers are invited to send in exclusive pictures, colour or black and white, of editorial value, with all relevant information including date, place and significance of subject matter. Pictures received will not be returned

Can't breathe this air!



Pretty soon, people in Dhaka will have to wear masks all the time. For those who travel by rickshaw, like this couple on the Bishaw Road from Kamlapur to Saidabad, the dust is unbearable. The damage done to infants and children by polluted air is often irreversible. What is the Environment Ministry doing? We need action, now.

BTV weather news

It is terrible that the BTV English news bulletin no longer includes the usual weather report. How can BTV think of presenting a complete news bulletin without a weather forecast? Every major news service provides a weather report and some provide regular updates as well on the weather

I would like to request the BTV authorities to kindly re-introduce the weather report immediately in the main English newscast every night..

A student

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO

No fence for the wind According to a news, Mr. Pugazhenthi Thangarajah, an excellent creative artist in Tamil Nadu, a State

in Southern India, directed a Tamil Movie called "Kaatrukkenna Veeli" (No fence for the wind). This movie conveys a clear message of how those in distress are in need of special care on the humanitarian ground. But, the Censor Board in India recently denied permission to screen this film in Tamil Nadu fearing that this movie would lead to protests and violence in favour of Eelam

We would all urge the creative artists to express their point of views as freely as they can in a more meaningful and productive manner, rather than wasting their skill by making films that promote violence.

End to hartals

The media is full of severe condemnation of those groups who indulge in political hartals. Why does the nation have to undergo this punishment? Who are the real culprits? Are they the people who support the leaders who call hartals? Why are such leaders supported by the workers and the public? These leaders should be thrown out unceremoniously, because as long they are supported, the nation will suffer.

Dynastic rule is one of the weaknesses of this nation. The next general elections should be a verdict on this issue. Let there be internal

Real democracy One of the problems with this coun-

try is that we do not have real democracy. Yes, we have elections and we have an elected government. But within the political parties, there is not even a semblance of real democracy. In order to mature as a democracy, we must start insisting that political parties hold real elections. The sense of feudalism that ensure loyalty to the existing leaders must be removed. There is no reason the present leaders cannot be elected, but let them win in merit, not

A citizen