

Road map: No straight route to peace



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

AS promised, US President George W. Bush, has taken in hand the question of a settlement of the half a century old Palestinian problem, after his victory (!) in Iraq. Whereas President Bush and his ally Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain made infernal noise about their war on tiny Iraq, the action in the never ending conflict between Palestine and Israel is considerably muted.

Since the failure of the talks between Chairman Yasser Arafat of Palestine and then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, under the dynamic leadership of President Bill Clinton of the US, now nearly three years ago, the entire area of Palestine and Israel has been engulfed in bloodletting of the worst kind, with Israelis using the most sophisticated weapons to kill and maim hapless Palestinians and poor Palestinians retaliating by suicide bombings. This gruesome atrocity has become the daily diet of the area and seeing TV pictures makes the stomach turn.

Presiding over this state of affairs is Mahmud Abbas, the new Prime Minister of Palestine and his Israeli counterpart Ariel Sharon. The emergence of Abbas on the scene replacing the elected leader Yasser Arafat is due to the fact that Sharon refuses to meet Arafat and has persuaded his friend President Bush to do likewise. This is the regime change in Palestine like the ouster of President Saddam Hussein in Iraq. No replacement of

THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

Getting embroiled in Iraq, finding no quick fix in Palestine-Israeli conflict, the US is raising the spectre of a nuclearised Iran -- the second in the list of 'axis of evil' of President Bush. He appears to be in a hurry. The presidential elections are knocking at the door. WMD seem not to go away. It has the potential of damaging his chances of re-election.

Saddam has been found to this day and it is not certain if Abbas will be a valid replacement.

Thus regime change does not appear to lead the US to any credible solution of the twin issues with which she is wrestling at present. With a lot of fanfare Prime Minister Sharon appears in inhabited settlements. Israeli bulldozers are seen leveling some flimsy structures and the jostling with some settlers give the impression of specially mounted for TV audiences. In any case Sharon is determined to see the end of terrorist outfits by bombing them out of the map of West Bank and Gaza. Similarly Prime Minister Abbas is valiantly trying to make a deal with various hardline fighter organisations of Palestinians, who continue to mount a credible challenge to Sharon. In the meantime we witness daily coffins being carried through the streets of West Bank and Gaza and Israeli cities. In this charged atmosphere it is a miracle that talks are at all held between the Palestinians and the Israelis. It is possible that the two sides have become so much numbed by the sight of blood that they pay no more heed.

After the fiasco in Iraq it is perhaps important for President Bush to show some plus side to his Presidency. President Bush appears embroiled in the question of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), hidden in Iraq, which he is sure will be found. As a matter of fact this so called WMD were his arguments for going to war against Iraq. His opponents the Democrats are on the

point of making the WMD, a potent campaign issue in the presidential elections a year and a half from now. On the other side of the Atlantic, his loyal ally Tony Blair is suffering from a loss of credibility for identical reasons. Two senior Ministers in Blair's Cabinet, Robin Cook and Clare Short, who resigned from the Cabinet, have accused Tony Blair to have misled them and the nation by

exaggerated claims of WMD in Iraq. There is open talk in Britain of changing Tony Blair to lead the Labour Party to the next general elections. Since the opposition Tory Party appears like a rudderless ship, surely the ruling Labour Party would not wish victory slip from their grasp.

If the picture in Palestine is bleak, it is no more cheery for President

George Bush in Iraq. His is an army of occupation and the Iraqis are treating it as such. The American forces are paying a heavy price daily by losing some of their men in uniform by snipers bullets. The US forces have hit back hard on one or two occasions. However, it must have become clear that strong arm method has succeeded nowhere against snipers. In a desperate bid



the US is trying to stretch the Security Council Resolution to lure mainly third world countries to contribute troops for peace keeping purposes in Iraq. On the other hand there is no specific Security Council Resolution authorising multilateral force. Lately India's Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani visited the US and the Americans launched a charm offensive so that India contributes troops. The US Secretary of State Colin Powell during his recent visit to Bangladesh brought up the matter and reminded the authorities here about the creditable performance of Bangladesh forces in UN peace keeping missions throughout the world's trouble spots. Now Bangladesh faces a dilemma. She is on record that she will contribute troops under UN umbrella with Security Council Resolution. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is reported to have stated that India should not accede to US request and supply troops. By requesting troops from third world countries US is trying to circumvent the Security Council, which she failed to do before launching her attack on Iraq in March last. In Bangladesh left leaning political parties have raised some noise against the visit of Powell and the prospect of sending troops to Iraq.

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Regime change in Iraq or Palestine does not seem to have been a good idea after all. Possible regime change in Iran does not bode well for Bush, for Iran or for the region.

Arshad-uz Zaman is a former Ambassador.

How likely is flood this year?

The El Niño-southern oscillation and seasonal climate

DR. MD. RASHED CHOWDHURY

THERE is evidence of teleconnections between the strength of El Niño and climate anomalies in Bangladesh. Although the El Niño-southern Oscillation (ENSO) affects one-quarter of the globe to a significant extent, the scientific research in Bangladesh relating to ENSO is just beginning. The prime objective of this article is to provide an improved description in general of the ENSO-related climate variability with particular emphasis to this year's climate and flooding scenario in Bangladesh. Basic information analyzed are: Bangladesh rainfall and flood-affected area time-series, and global precipitation, sea surface temperature (SST), and atmospheric circulation data.

The study revealed that Bangladesh climate -- despite weak quantitative correspondence between the strength of ENSO and the rainfall anomaly -- has particularly a strong relation when SOI (Southern Oscillation Index) extremes, indicate negative value of SOI to dry extremes and positive value of SOI to wet ones. In case of moderate anomaly in the SOI, the index-climate relation appeared to be contradictory and, in particular, Bangladesh is wet during the moderate El Niño years. Therefore, while the SOI-rainfall relation in the upstream Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basins in India shows strong casual connection indicating El Niño (*both strong and moderate*) to dry and La Niña to wet, the same SOI-rainfall relationship offers limited applicability in the context of Bangladesh climate. So, understanding the broad-scale features of the Asian monsoon with especial emphasis to Bangladesh is very essential.

Asian monsoon is one of the important components of the coupled ocean-land-atmosphere system. Although in India considerable work has been done on variability of climate and particularly rainfall by analysis of the extensive data sets of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the nature of

climate variability over other parts of the sub-continental monsoon region, such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan, is not so well documented. Therefore, detailed investigation on the relationship between the Bangladeshi monsoon and monsoons of the other regions in Asia, in particular India, will enhance our understanding of the large-scale features of the monsoon in the greater Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basin system.

El Niño and La Niña years

Given that there are typical characteristics of El Niño and La Niña, how are specific 'ENSO events' defined? How large must the value of the index be, and for how long must it persist in order for an El Niño or La Niña to be identified as strong or moderate? Any definitive objective procedure for classifying intensity is yet to be explored. However, a common method used for this purpose is based on the Niño 3.4 SST index. In this method, an El Niño or La Niña event is identified if the five-month running average of the Niño 3.4 index exceeds +0.4°C (for El Niño) and 0.4°C (for La Niña) for at least six consecutive months. According to this multivariate ENSO index, seven major El Niño years are 1997-98, 1991-92, 1986-87, 1982-83, 1972-73, 1965-66 and 1957-58, and seven major La Niña years are 1998-99, 1988-89, 1975-76, 1973-74, 1970-71, 1964-65, 1954-55 and 1949-50. This ranking would even vary if based on an averaged Niño 3.4 index over different seasons. Further it was observed that the relative ranking of events would vary if the ranking were based on an index other than Niño 3.4. For example, the classification system in the Western Regional Climate Center's (WRCC) that is based on the average value of SOI for the months of June-November provides a different ranking of events. With this WRCC approach, the ENSO phase is determined by atmospheric quantities (SOI) (value of SOI = -1.0: Strong El Niño, SOI = -0.5: Moderate El Niño, SOI = +0.5:

Moderate La Niña, and SOI = +1.0: Strong La Niña). Another classification that is based on cold (La Niña) and warm (El Niño) episodes is also available. This has been compiled to provide a season-by-season breakdown of cold and warm conditions in the tropical Pacific.

Based on this information we have classified five strong (or major) El Niño years -- 1951, 1958, 1972, 1982, and 1997, and five strong (or major) La Niña years -- 1964, 1973, 1975, 1988 and 1998.

The years we have finally identified for moderate El Niño are 1963, 1965, 1969, 1974, and 1987, and for moderate La Niña, 1956, 1970, 1971, 1984 and 1999.

ENSO-rainfall: Bangladesh

It is evident that the seasonal

deficits, tended to show an increase of overall seasonal rainfall: +13.6% for the Ganges and +20% for the Brahmaputra. All the successive months displayed similar trends too. In case of strong La Niña years, the values of SOIs changed from negative to positive (FMAM: --0.4, May minus March: +1.0), and the high positive value of SOI in JJAS (+1.9) caused an increase of average seasonal and monthly rainfall in all the three basins (1). Other than the Meghna basin, the excessive fall remained active during the moderate cool years too.

The most important findings here are that the extreme negative and positive values of SOIs are associated to rainfall variability, i.e., rainfall decreases with the extreme negative SOIs in JJAS, FMAM, and May

The SOI-rainfall relation in the greater GBM basin systems shows strong casual connection to SOI extremes indicating negative value to dry and positive value to wet. Therefore, when SOI is negative (i.e. strong El Niño years) the whole basin experiences less rainfall. The deficiency of rainfall causes Bangladesh rivers to be drying because of low-flow and, as a result, the country faces severe drought. On the other hand, when SOI is positive (both in strong and moderate La Niña years) there is significant increase of rainfall along the greater GB basins causing flooding along the whole catchments. This, in turn, severely floods Bangladesh, as it is the lowest riparian country in these basins. However, in case of moderate SOI-rainfall relationship (moderate El Niño years), the basin-wide rainfall picture in downstream Bangladesh is relatively different from upstream India. With marginal deficit of rainfall (4%) in Meghna basin, Bangladesh experiences high rainfall along the Ganges (+13.6%) and Brahmaputra (+20.4%) basins -- these are all significantly higher than in the La Niña years (1). Although the upstream rainfall is not very dominant (18.4% for Ganges, 0.6% for Brahmaputra, and +10% for Meghna) (2), the exceptionally high and prolonged local rainfall contributes to flooding in Bangladesh (7: +60% deviation from the normal). On contrary, the excessive rainfall in the upstream (+18.5% for Ganges and +2.7% for Brahmaputra) and downstream (+19.8% for Ganges and +8.2% for Brahmaputra) of greater GB basins during the moderate La Niña years causes flooding inside Bangladesh (7: +24% deviation from the normal).

Why Bangladesh is wet during moderate El Niño years?

When SOI is negative, Walker circulation is weakened, then the easterly wind is also weakened or completely reversed. To clearly understand the mechanism, we have constructed two composites: (i) strong El Niño minus La Niña years, and ii) moderate El Niño minus strong La Niña years. The underlying hypothesis here is that the movement of tropical disturbances formed in the western Pacific governs the strength of the

Bangladesh monsoon. It is stated in the climate literature that when the Walker circulation is weak, the Hadley circulation is strong; that is, the zonal wind weakens and the meridional wind strengthens causing absence of any significant convergence over Bangladesh. As a consequence, the tropical disturbances are transported northward or northeastward depriving Bangladesh from precipitation and causing either deficit rain or drought. On contrary, when SOI is negative (moderate El Niño years), the Hadley circulation is not as strong as during major El Niño years and, therefore, allows the tropical disturbances to cross into the Bay of Bengal and Bangladesh causing heavy rainfall and flooding.

ENSO-2002/03 and Bangladesh climate

Following the dissipation of the 2002-03 El Niño in April, sea surface temperatures across the central and eastern tropical Pacific continued to decrease and are currently below average. There is now a significant possibility that a La Niña may develop. Based on the behaviour of past La Niña event onsets, and recent surface and subsurface observations and model forecasts, there has been an estimated likelihood of 55% that La Niña would develop by June (*If a La Niña does not develop, it is most likely that the tropical Pacific will remain in near-neutral conditions. If a La Niña does develop, associated climate effects could be experienced in June or July*). This is the forecast provided by the IRI see (<http://iri.columbia.edu/climate/ENSO/currentinfo/update.html>). Based on these findings, the likelihood of Bangladesh climate to be wet is above average during the monsoon of 2003. This is a probabilistic forecast that is based on monitoring of the ocean and knowledge of how the atmosphere has responded in the past to similar SSTs in Bangladesh, with a variety of lag times.

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In memoriam

Anisul Haque

An extraordinary ad professional

AYESHA HAQUE

OBSTINATE, temperamental, intelligent, sensitive, affectionate, kind and proud are only a few words to describe the man named Anisul Haque, to me who was simply Kaku.

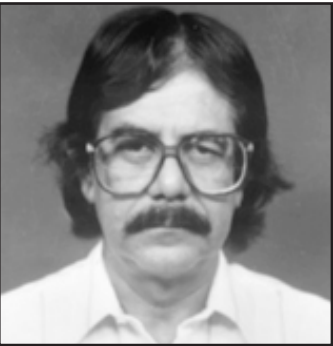
He was born on the 3rd of August 1938. In a family of twelve brothers and sisters he was the most stubborn and incorrigible one. He passed his SSC with four letters and a first division. He changed his major during his HSC and later completed his BA in Arts as he did not find science particularly interesting. Rather he was more worried about cultural affairs both at school and college. He was bent on becoming a barrister at law but time and circumstances did not allow him to be. Since nobody wanted to support him, he left the house and joined the Muladuli High School, Ishwardi, Pabna and worked as a headmaster for one year saved some money and left for Karachi where he studied journalism and was finally satisfied.

A radio journalist turned ad man Anisul Haque ranked among the prominent in advertising in this country. His long association with LINTAS (Lever International Advertising Service) worked both ways: he learnt his job and established himself as a skilled, sophisticated hand, as well as contributed no less than others in enriching that agency through hard and sincere work and utilization of his rich imaginative faculty.

After serving for a period in Karachi and Dhaka Radio as an officer newsman, he joined LINTAS in 1964 as a management trainee. After two years he was assigned to the creative team of that agency where he served as a copywriter, film producer and TV manager for four years.

Then he was switched over to Client Service Department as accounts coordination manager and in 1968 promoted to senior management cadre and was assigned with the job of client service group head.

In April 1972, he was implicated in relation to the Liberation War of Bangladesh and here life took a drastic turn for him. The Pakistan intelligence service without any substantial cause abducted him. He was thoroughly interrogated by them and later locked up in solitary confinement for two to three months during which nobody knew his whereabouts. He was charge sheeted with some serious accusations of treason, robbery, illegal possession of arms and hijacking. After months of grueling trials he finally received bail after Simla Agreement signed between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Butto. Since he was involved in Bangladesh Liberation War the head office of Unilever at the recommendation of Pakistan management terminated his job.



It was, however, nice of Asiatic Advertising people to allow him to continue his work at their organisation till his repatriation to Bangladesh by ICRC in 1974.

Anisul Haque brought Adbiz International Advertising Ltd. to life in 1975 and tagged my father along as a director. As most people would agree those were his golden years. He had everything he wanted in life but still the urge to advance was too strong to resist.

But I guess all good things must come to an end and Adbiz closed down after nineteen years of successful operation. He was very upset and disappointed at the turn of events but still he did not let that affect his life and continued nevertheless with his dream to achieve further. He was life member of Dhaka Club and Annada Govinda Public Library Pabna and an associate member of the Jatiya Press Club.

For his great contribution to the advertising world he was acclaimed as one of the legends of advertising in Bangladesh on 18th April 2003 by the Ad Club. Unfortunately due to ill health, he was unable to receive the award in person but he told me to collect it on his behalf. It was my greatest privilege to share the dais with nine legends of advertising and I was really proud of my Kaku. It was at that point that I realised that there was more to him than met the eye. Now that he is gone I can feel his absence in everything. Anisul Haque expired on June 15 last.

From my childhood he treated me like a princess, in fact that is what he used to call me. Even after I joined university he would still call me that until I died of embarrassment! He had held high opinions as far as my brother and I was concerned and he played the part of a mentor, a father, a teacher and a friend in all our lives.

What I loved most about him was his ability to make things look so much simple and easy. He was a man of many talents but most of all he was a 'perfect gentleman.' He knew how to treat others even if he himself received some unfortunate reactions from some people.

He might not be with us anymore but he has left his legacy behind. I pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Ayesha Haque is niece of late Anisul Haque.

Lest we forget

Emran -- our old Armenian friend

MESBAH-US-SALEHEEN

I first met K.M. Ejajul Huq Emran in early fifties when I got myself admitted to the then one of the best schools of our country -- the Armentitola Government H.E. School (it was called then). We became friends in no time and that friendship continued till his unfortunate demise three years ago. After passing our Matriculation Examination in 1959 from the same school, we got ourselves admitted in the Notre Dame College -- Emran in the Arts section and myself in the science. After passing our Intermediate Examination both of us joined as students in the Department of Geography, University of Dhaka. Emran was by nature a friendly man. Urbanity, wit and humour were the characteristics of Emran. He could mix with people of all ages at a party or in a function. He was charming, articulate and a great communicator. He used to mix with people with charismatic ease and loved to spend hours after hours in friendly *Adda*. I have spent many hours in the company of him, especially in our school, college and university days. I fondly remember those occasions and will cherish our memories for good. A quiet and self-effacing civil servant, Emran was



known for his dedication and worked for improvement of governance with courage.. He held various important charges in the government and lastly, before his demise, he was the Secretary of Industries. He wrote and researched on agricultural problems in our country. He passed away three years ago on June 16. We, the friends of Emran, remember him on his third anniversary of passing away. He will remain to all of us who knew him so long as an individual of virtues.

Mesbah-us-Saleheen is Professor of Geography and Environment, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka.

Evaluating from the composite picture of events-response relationship in these years, some interesting findings relating to SOI and seasonal rainfall deviation appeared. Strong El Niño years (1951, 1958, 1972, 1982, and 1997) provided negative values of SOI and the average deficits of seasonal rainfall were --19% and --16% for the Ganges and Brahmaputra basins. Meghna basin did not show any significant variation. The deficit was found to be significant for most of the successive monsoon months (i.e., June, July, August, and September). Findings revealed that a negative value of SOI for the months of JJAS (-1.9) was strongly correlated to rainfall deficit and drought in Bangladesh. During these El Niño years, negative values of SOIs started appearing from the previous season FMAM (-0.4), and the May minus March SOI was negative (1.5). While considering the moderate El Niño years, the negative values of SOIs appeared as usual, but values were not as high as before (JJAS: -- 1.2, FMAM: -- 0.2, and May minus Mar: -- 0.8). This resulted in a reverse rainfall picture in Bangladesh, which, instead of

Basin-wide composite picture of events-response relationship shows some interesting association between SOI and seasonal rainfall deviation in upstream basins. Here also, all major El Niño years recorded moderate-to-weak rainfall deficit in all the three basins: the seasonal deficits were: 4.9% in Ganges, -- 8.8% in Brahmaputra, and 0.7% in Meghna. Similarly, all the major La Niña years recorded excessive rainfall: +5.2% in the Ganges, +6.6% in the Brahmaputra, and +3.5% in the Meghna basins. Rainfall during the moderate El Niño years displays significant deficit in the upstream Ganges (– 18.4%) and shows moderately high in the upstream Meghna (+10%). These give a clear variability picture of SOI-rainfall relation along the greater GB basins (Meghna displays slightly different results) -- the relationship is linear in the upstream India indicating rainfall decreases during the El Niño years and increases during the La Niña years (both in strong and moderate case). In case of Bangladesh the moderate El Niño years are wet and experience excessive local rainfall.

ENSO- seasonal flooding