LATE S. M. ALI

**DHAKA THURSDAY AUGUST 12, 2004** 

#### **US trafficking report**

Let's not forget that main problem is demand

N June the US listed Bangladesh as one of ten countries failing to do enough to stop trafficking of women and children, and threatened economic sanctions if the US concerns were not adequately addressed by October. The US team sent to reassess the situation arrived on Monday, resulting in Bangladesh government contesting the US perception of a deteriorating direction of things here. But a certain public relations blitz on the part of the government to convince the Americans that it has indeed taken sufficient steps to combat trafficking is also on.

The first thing to mention at this stage is that it remains unclear how precisely things have deteriorated from previous years, when Bangladesh was considered a Tier 2 country according to the US State Department report and this year, when relegation to Tier 3 has been threatened.

The second point is whether the withdrawal of nonhumanitarian and non-trade related assistance, as has been threatened, is the appropriate means through which to fight the global trade in human trafficking. There is no question that the global trade in women and children is a planet-wide tragedy and that every effort should be made to free the victims of the trade from the misery and degradation that are inflicted upon them. Nor is there any question that our governments have not done nearly enough to combat it.

However, surely as much, if not more, blame for the sorry state of affairs lies with the countries of destination for the trafficked women and children and the demand for their forced servitude. Until we see similar steps taken by the US against countries where trafficked women and children are on demand and consigned to a miserable existence, we will not be impressed that its concerns for the unfortunate victims of the trade is genuine.

The Bangladesh government can and must do more to bring a halt to this trade in human misery. The suspicion remains that if it were not for the threat of sanctions that the government would have continued to drag its feet. However, if the US is truly serious about combating human trafficking, it needs to pay more attention to the demand side of the

#### Shakeup in Sylhet police

The same old cosmetic angle?

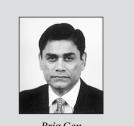
FTER all that we have witnessed in Sylhet in the recent days, it was expected that the government would do something to set things right as far as the performance of the law enforcers is concerned. There is no doubt that the bomb blasts have widely been seen as having a lot to do with intelligence and law enforcement failures.

However, the government move to go for a major shakeup in Sylhet police administration appears to be one of those cosmetic and palliative measures that are adopted every time something goes awfully wrong. There was a reshuffling in the police set-up after the shrine blast and the government has deemed it necessary to repeat the exercise. The logic behind the move is perhaps that since the police failed to prevent the bomb attacks, bringing in new faces is worth trying. We saw a similar manoeuvring in Chittagong police after the mystery surrounding the abduction of business magnet Jamaluddin remained unsolved for months together.

Such moves hardly ever pay any dividends; they are merely an eye-wash having little impact, other than creating the impression that the government has after all woken up. In case of Sylhet, the cops on the transfer list are suspected to have links with the outlaws. Now, this is a serious charge, and if found true, would call for far sterner measures than relocating the officials concerned. Another point to be taken note of is that usually it's the low and mid level officials who are transferred. Don't the police high-ups have any responsibility in the failed performance of the officers and cops under their charge?

The need, obviously, is to delve deeper into the issue of police administration deficiencies. There is no point in changing the bottle if its contents remain the same. The failure of the police must be attributed to some built-in flaws and limitations of the whole system. The idea of police reform has been articulated for the umpteenth time by the intelligentsia, but it has remained a non-starter to this day. Reform might be a long-drawn and costly proposition. Yet, there is no substitute for it.

# Politics of insurgent camps and need for mutual trust



SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN

VERY time the border security forces of Bangla-desh and India meet, Bangladesh side is handed over a list of insurgent camps operating in its territory. Bangla-desh riposte is a similar list, only the number of miscreant camps on the Bangladesh list is fewer than what appears in the Indian list. This has become almost ritualistic. The denials and claims and counter claims that follow are natural but do not help in mitigating the suspicion that continue to afflict our

bilateral relationship.

One notices that the number of camps on the Indian list, handed over to Bangladesh, during the most recent meeting between the BDR and the Indian BSF, has gone up to 195. By the last Indian count it was 192. It is worth noting that the practice of providing list of Indian miscreants' camp in Bangladesh has been going on for some time now, with varying degree of intensity. What is also worthy of note is the intensity of the Indian complaints, which modulates between severe and mild, depending on the perceived disposition of the government in

Dhaka towards India. It is worthy of note too that no such complaints came to Bangladesh's hand while the CHT insurgency was at its peak.

The only difference this time, which is very significant, is the comment made by the Indian leader of the delegation to the Indian press, imputing to the BDR the act of direct abettment of these miscreants. PTI says, "they have direct evidence that the BDR personnel mingling with the militants and protecting them

other part of the Bangladesh-India border, straddle the political bound-

It is also an inescapable dictate of nature that the terrain, being what it is, renders effective and continuous oversight and surveillance of the region rather difficult, if not altogether impossible, something that the leader of the Indian delegation has also acknowl-

Given the criteria above, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that

According to. Indian analysts, India is worried about the prospects of the fringe Muslim elements in these border regions of generating trouble and garnering support from the radical elements in Bangladesh, to subsume a part of this area within Bangladesh. They see collusion between the Bangladesh and Pakistan intelligence agencies in fomenting the unrest. This c e n a r i o is more relevant in the case of Assam

than the other states of the North-East.

One must also look objectively at Bangladesh's standpoint in this regard. It has been Bangladesh's policy not to allow insurgent groups from across the border to operate from within its territory and from time to time the Bangladesh security forces have rounded up such elements from inside Bangladesh. In this regard Bangladesh's quandary is something quite similar to that of India's vis a vis Nepal, where similar allegations are levelled against India for allegedly

sheltering Nepali Maoist insurgents in

its territory, unbeknownst to the

Given the lay of the terrain of this

region, one cannot discount the

possibilities of the miscreants' cross-

ing into Bangladesh and even taking

temporary shelter here unbeknownst

to our security forces. One fails to see

any strategic dividends accruing to

Bangladesh from its alleged support to

these miscreants, simply because,

one, it would be counterproductive

for Bangladesh to engender a situa-

tion that might affect its territorial

Indian security forces.

from an unstable North-East. It is difficult to believe that the strategic planners in Bangladesh are not aware of the negative consequences and the likely pitfalls of such a policy.

While it is not the purpose here to go into a detail critique of the likely scenario, that is painted by some international analysts, of the consequence of Islamist nexus in the Bangladesh and the northeast border region of India, the strategic farsightedness of those that are allegedly seeking to carve out a Muslim state in the North-East cannot but be guestioned. To even a strategic ignoramus it would not be hard to see that a 'greater Muslim North-East' would have the same fate as that of the Kurds hemmed in by hostile groups, being landlocked and left to the mercy of the neighbours - doomed to destruction. What strategic gain would this new configuration bring Bangladesh either, is difficult to imagine. However, it is not hard to imagine why such drivels are churned out from time to time in the international media.

Concerns and compulsions must be addressed without trying to take advantage of a neighbour's predicament. Goodwill can only develop if efforts taken to assuage each other's concerns display sincerity of purpose.

This can come about only in an

atmosphere of mutual trust.

integrity in the future, given the The author is Editor, Defense and Strategic Affairs, 'The cultural, ethnic and etymological

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also." This is a serious allegation, which has serious implications. It cannot miss the eyes of even a casual observer that there is a shift in the Indian emphasis, in that it now sees Bangladesh's complicity in the activities of the Indian miscreants. These claims have been rejected by the BDR.

It is therefore necessary to consider the merit of the issue objectively.

The fact is that there is an ongoing insurgency situation in the Indian North-East, varying from high to moderate in intensity. In fact, the causes of dissension and the prevailing insurgency situation following therefrom in some of the states of the North-East predate the partition of 1947.

It is also a geopolitical reality that most of the peoples, culture and other linkages in the Northeast, like any the Indian miscreants or insurgents, whatever one wishes to call these elements, will exploit all the variables that are outside the states' control, to their advantage. If they use the territory of Bangladesh they do so not at the behest of Bangladesh but of their own volition It would be unfair to suggest that Bangladesh follows a policy of active support to these miscreants in their anti-Indian activity.

However, there are perhaps other compulsions that provoke the type of Indian posture on the issue of insurgency and India's North-East vis a vis Bangladesh. One needs to be conscious of the very sensitive nature of this area that India is finding hard to rein in, despite many peace treaties between the government of India and various insurgents groups of the North-East.

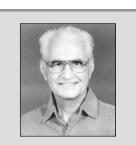
The following quote sums up the anxiety, "Islamic militant activities have begun to proliferate in the region... Recent reports have also indicated that the ISI and the DGFI are reportedly encouraging the illegal influx with an eye to carving out a Brihot Bangladesh (Greater Bangladesh) in the region." (Jaideep Saika, ACDIS Paper, July 2003).

The other Indian motivation perhaps stems from Sun Tzu's maxim of winning wars without fighting a battle and winning battles without firing a shot. There may be a degree of pressure, through these allegations to persuade Bangladesh on the strategic plane to meet India's strategic needs. Each of the issues merits serious consideration by relevant circles in

tenor of the region. Secondly, the efficacy of a quid pro quo policy of indirect pressure will be

less than fruitful. Bangladesh stands

## Nukes cause all the trouble



M B NAQVI

UGUST 6 and 9 were days that forced one to ponder over atomic weapons. There is global unanimity that these are not weapons of war; they are evil machines of death and destruction aimed at life itself. There is no defence against this monster; it does not discriminate between civilians and soldiers nor between man and animals. But exclusive possession of this engine of death by a few countries conferred tremen dous power and influence on them Others dearly sought NWMDs as a currency of power and status among did just that. Pakistan acquired them to get even with India.

Thinkers and humanists everywhere have ran peace movements that put the nuclear powers on the defensive, though the interplay of money, military power, politics and immense benefits for key personnel has caused the preservation of WMDs. In fact, the Bomb acquired a key role, Still, the Big Five do not brag about these weapons the way Indians and Pakistanis went ga ga over their 'achievement' in making them. In South Asia, peace movements of the CND type are small and weak. These two proud states shout that their nuclear deterrents, being invincible, have made them secure. Many of their people have come to believe that.

It is time -- after a grand 10 month military confrontation between India and Pakistan and the Indian initiative of peacemaking -- to pause and think. though the original hopes have already hit the encrusted positions on all the eight subjects. Suddenly the effusive expectations are being replaced by near disappointment. The realisation is growing that nothing much has changed; neither side seems ready to The supposition was that with these CBMs in place, Pakistan and India can become civilised neighbours, cooperating with each other for mutual benefit. Not so, say I. Cold war between the west and Soviets was not similar to the bitter Indo-Pak rivalry and non-stop arms race it entails. On technical grounds, a Prithivi or Ghori will take three to five minutes to do its murderous job and that means the near impossibility of CBMs being able to do their Authority said Pakistan's defences

scends Kashmir because some security wallahs believe that India will undo Pakistan on a suitable occasion on some pretext because it has not accepted the 1947 partition at heart. So the Bomb is a permanent necessity of Pakistan's national security. We need to critically examine this security

What has national security gained and what has been lost is the question. into IHK, probably guaranteed by the US, just as it had gained from July 4, 1999 agreement: Pakistani troops vacated the heights. It would be a foolish Indian government that will go to war when it can gain its main purposes by diplomacy, albeit with the US assistance. That is the immediate cost. including the reversing of a 12-year old Kashmir policy, to be debited to the Bomb because except for it no Pakistani general could have encouraged

## PLAIN WORDS

The solution lies in Pakistan ignoring India and implementing its stated goal of Nuclear Weapons Free South Asia to the extent it can. That means getting rid of them. It is also necessary because the hoped for security from the Bomb is not available. On Islamabad's own admission one of its success has been in keeping the Bomb safe, rather than it keeping Pakistan safe.

change stance or make any substantial agreements.

There never were reserves of trust

and goodwill between the ruling establishments of India and Pakistan. The emergence of two antagonistic nuclear deterrents have destroyed the very possibility of acquiring a modicum of trust to make mutually beneficial agreements possible. That is due to the peculiar nature of these WMDs: they destroy trust in a radical fashion. With nuclear-tipped missiles ready to be fired at Pakistani targets, which guardian of Pakistani national security can rely on India's good sense? Similarly Pakistan's Ghoris at the ready with their nuclear payload cannot make Pakistan trustworthy enough to make India lower its guard.

Both sides had indicated that a restraint regime comprising Confidence Building Measures is possible.

assigned job in the interval between have been made invincible anarmedinsurrection in IHK. concession. The danger now is overthe launch and hitting of the target. by its nukes: India will stay deterred. the same. CBMs between these two states are nothing new; some have been in place since long. But during high military tensions they have never worked. A general faced with an imminent threat does not reach for the hotline; he rushes to reposition his guns and troops. The problem of the Bomb itself requires some solution, though it is hard to conceive what it can be -- other than total disarmament.

Pakistani Bomb was originally meant to wipe out the shame of 1971 defeat by humbling India -- likely in Kashmir. Even otherwise it was related to Kashmir, Later it was justified on the ground that without the Bomb, the Kashmir struggle will ignite a war and India's preponderance in conventional armaments may result in another 1971. The Bomb is a guarantee against that. This guarantee is general and tranand more decisively by the credible threat of military invasion by India in 2002 is the exact opposite. It was touch and go in 2002. India was daring Pakistan to a war, unafraid of Pakistani nukes; in fact George Fernandes put down the Pak deterrent by saying let Islamabad use the nukes first. It would then wait for the riposte: that will send Pakistan back to the Stone Age. What conclusion can be drawn from the 2002 experience? There was no effective deterrent; it was Pakistan that, by staying on the defensive, was deterred

Still, deterrence can be said to have worked in some way because there was no war, after all. But look at the immediate and long-term political costs: India gained what it wanted: it wrenched an assurance from Pakistan President that no more Jihadis will go

A few of longer-term costs can also

to the extent that a war with India is now impossible. The Kashmir policy so far had the sanction that, at the end of the day, Pakistan would come to the aid of embattled and threatened Kashmiris while Pakistani nukes will make India hold its horses. Without this assumption the older policy made absolutely no sense other than letting Kashmiris be killed en masse. That prospect is no more. Now there is no go other than negotiating with India. But negotiating what? If the threat of a decisive Pakistan military action is removed, the Indians will stand pat on their sovereignty over Kashmir and that will be that. Our much-hyped deterrent will be of no practical use.

The social and political consequences of the militarisation of Pakistan economy and society cannot be ignored indefinitely. Pakistan's devel-

opment has been stunted by its preoccupation with Kashmir. That was the cause of military acquiring extraordinary importance and role in national affairs. We now have a very large military establishment that cannot go to war with its named enemy. Its nuclear deterrent stands checkmated and has been rendered irrelevant. If it does not deter India from threatening invasion. and credibly too, of what use are these nukes? Pakistan now has no policy on Kashmir for the sake of which it made India its permanent enemy, Pakistan has lost far too many opportunities of growth. Its present rise in inflation and poverty is due to the continuing militarisation of the economy. The society is divided radically also because of the same orientation. And yet Kashmir is not an inch closer to its Azadi. The whole subject is now open to

debate: what should Pakistanis do with their nukes that have proved inadequate in deterrence. It is a painful conclusion that cannot be escaped from. The CBMs and the restraint regimes are fair weather birds; they will be there so long as there is peace. But when war conditions prevail, the NRR would be the first casualty. It is good to have an NRR for marginal improvements in the day-to-day situation and to prevent accidents. But it is not a solution of the problem posed by the nuclear weapons. The solution lies in Pakistan ignoring India and implementing its stated goal of Nuclear Weapons Free South Asia to the extent it can. That means getting rid of them. It is also necessary because the hoped for security from the Bomb is not available. On Islamabad's own admission one of its success has been in keeping the Bomb safe, rather than it keeping Pakistan safe.

MB Naqvi is a leading columist in Pakistan.

### TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

#### Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

#### EC's role

Acting chief election commissioner had done well to book a group of election code violators that had created a healthy atmosphere to conduct the Gazipur 2 by-election. The election also proved that should the public servants play a non-partisan role in an election, and army deployed, fair election is still possible in Bangladesh. The immediate past by-election that the EC had conducted was Dhaka 10, which was just opposite of the Gazipur 2 by-election.

The public outrage at the Dhaka 10 by-election was evident from the letters published in the newspapers. Social sciences researcher and consul-

Shyamoli, Dhaka

#### Too costly

I had read the announcement in the paper of the birth of some glossy addition to our art and literature environment. I borrowed the copy from a reader who can afford to buy it. After one hour's browsing, I would like

to share some superficial first reactions with the readers and the publishers, after a lifetime of reader-exposure of six decades, sampling such magazines or journals originating from different countries, and occasionally hobby (including one criticizing a foreign western architect that the design of the Jatiya Sangsad is not suitable for an LDC like Dhaka, situated in a delta region; as also condemning the design of the BTV Bhaban at Rampura by an architect of North Europe).

My hunch feeling is that everything cannot be analyzed in black and white, that is, in writing, i.e. in language, specially written language. You watch a scenery, it touches you but it takes pages to transfer it to another person through a letter or essay; or even verbally. The limitation of the medium has to be recognized. The professional

critics ignore this point. Take the empathy between mother and baby; or between a pair of lovers (man and woman); or even between a master and his dog). It is intuitive, needs no language or medium. Both human art and language are mediums. Then what is the message?

I liked the piece on time space cubic analysis of the Singaporean mind or personality the first time I had come ross such an approach. I had resided near Singapore for ten years, and was a regular visitor to Singapore. It is the island mentality, like the English or the Japanese. Singapore is much smaller with a small heterogeneous population. But too materialistic. Not interested in small talk and drawing room adda (the Bengalees are different). After shopping, what to do in this country of high standard of living? I kept away from the bania mentality. On the other hand, the Malays have the Kampong touch, and employ Chinese managers to look after their business. I also did not like Hong

The human touch is missing in materialistic societies in the industrial world. In fact, I preferred Asia to the West, after travelling in more than thirty countries. I felt more at home in the Asian countriesthe cradle of

civilization. The strong sense of individualism in the West (industrialized developed nations) is well mirrored by the mobile cellular telephone-the world is at your fingertips (GSM), but the two-way communication is controlled one-way. This system or effect is due to the break up of the society's nucleus, namely the family? Our son in Dhaka (in his 20s, a

senior honors student and working his way through the university) is a victim of this modern malady-cooped up in his room (den) with door shut and lost in his individualistic world of mobile phone, PC, CD and second-hand car. Mind it: I did not contribute to his material acquisitions.

Good photography (capturing three dimensions in two dimensions) is more communicative and can contribute more to understanding than pages of the written word. Some photographs of tribal life were very good. The point is the mood has to be transferred to the common reader or viewer, without technical jargon and high-brow analysis by the critics. The question is now to click without trying (ion both sides)

Why Indian writers and critics have so much fondness for adjectives? I generally avoid Indian critics (and most writers). They are too sensitive and want to emphasize something more than once in a paragraph. Is it a sign of inferiority complex? Too much hammering. Take it easy! Anyway, the birth of this "Journal"

is to be welcomed-better than nothing. The test lies in the next six issuesclick or flop. How to come down to

#### Good for democracy

Amid unprecedented destruction by the recent deluge across the county, people's eyes were fixed on the Gazipur-2 by-election where multi dimensional factors coincided along with the fact that the Awami league for the first time participated in an election under this government. The constituency fell vacant after the heinous killing of a very popular leader of this area, Ahsanullah Master.

According to the rule of the constitution, election must be held within 90 days when a constituency falls vacant. People feared a showdown, but the election was held peacefully. People also became de-motivated by the ruling party when Sumon, the key witness o to Ashanullah Master's killing, died in the custody of RAB, which ignited the fury of condemna-

Actually this victory is a victory of passion and a recognition of the good deeds of the late politician. We also appreciate the gesture of

the defeated four-party alliance candidate who accepted the results without demur. ABM Shafigul Islam

#### Jahngirnagar University Relation between

Dept of English

cousins

In our society marriage among cousins is quite common. But we are suspicious about its benefits as medical science nowadays discourage marriage between cousins from

nearest relatives. Because this couple could give birth to disabled children. Moreover, their children are more prone to be affected by diseases by way of inheritance like blood pressure. diabetes etc. Except those, it has other problems. In many Muslim families, cousins do not feel comfortable with each other. If any young boy and girl, who are cousins, get close to each other, other relatives might not take it easy. Moreover, parents from both families also oppose this kind of association. They believe their son or daughter who are cousins could fall in love which may lead to marriage. But this notion of parents creates psychological problems among the cousins.

Family is the basement for fulfillment of physical and psychological requirements. Free association of boys and girls in family adds to their mental maturity. They come to know the nature of human mind. This experience assists them to face the real world outside their homes. This will reduce the awful result of misunderstanding between a boy and a girl So, the parents should change their University of Dhaka.

#### Foreign donation

About 30 million people of Bangladesh are struggling to survive as floods have inundated 40 out of the 64 districts. The extent of damage has been colossal both in terms of life and property. The donor countries and many other humanitarian organizations have come to the rescue of the affected people.

I urge the government, political leaders and local leaders to utilise foreign donations properly in the interest of the humanity in distress and also to dispel doubts regarding misappropriation of relief goods.

#### Md. Shafiquee Dept. of English