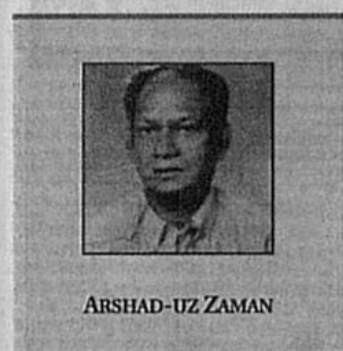


Palestine after Arafat

Should Bush change his ME policy?



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

CHAIRMAN of Palestine Yasser Arafat left this world without seeing his dream fulfilled. The birth of the independent state of Palestine came tantalisingly close and it eluded the grasp of his dreamer Yasser Arafat. He wanted to be buried in Jerusalem, the first Qibla of Islam and the capital of the future state of Palestine. Because of the obstinacy of his detractor Ariel Sharon, the Prime Minister of Israel his body was laid to rest in Ramallah, with a handful of earth brought from Jerusalem. He breathed his last not in his beloved Palestine but in a military hospital in France.

During the last three years of his life Yasser Arafat was a virtual prisoner in his own home in Ramallah and Sharon continually threatened him with expulsion and often death. It is a measure of the will of Arafat that he survived in

those inhuman conditions. Sharon had the tacit support of George Bush, President of the strongest power on earth. It is possible to surmise that President Bush was paying a debt for Sharon's help in winning the Presidency. For after all the Jewish lobby has a special place in the USA. Such is the power of that lobby that no US politician dare to

Before George Bush there is the wonderful initiative of his predecessor Bill Clinton, who for once established a completely neutral position between Arafat and the then Israeli Premier Ehud Barak. It is because the two leaders could not rise to the occasion that the strenuous eight-year effort of Clinton ended in failure leading to

edly the Middle East and the heart of that dispute is Palestine-Israel. Any initiative without taking this into account is doomed to failure. Former President Bill Clinton had narrowed down the differences and challenged the antagonists to decide on the question of division of Jerusalem. In my humble opinion President Bush does not

Shatilla. During the Presidency of Bill Clinton Israel had a dove as Prime Minister -- Ehud Barak. Indeed there is enormous thirst in Israel for Peace. Sharon won the elections defeating Barak on the promise to the electorate that he would guarantee security. His high handed policy has totally failed. It should be possible for the US to find a replacement for Sharon.

Since the passing away of Yasser Arafat we have witnessed that the leadership has remained united and the institutions created by Arafat have remained in place. The possibility of Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) succeeding Chairman Arafat appears bright. But he cannot take the place of Arafat because Arafat emerged as a historic leader thrown up by the Palestinian Revolution.

The question that is on everybody's mind is whether George Bush will be able to change substantially his Middle East policy. Bill Clinton had achieved the remarkable feat of even handedness in his dealing with Arafat and the Israeli leaders. His White House doors were open to Arafat as they were open for Rabin and Barak. President Bush continues to be surrounded by virtually the same team that he had during his just completed Presidency. It would be nothing short of a miracle if he succeeds in opening his White House doors to the Palestinians as well.

LEST WE FORGET

Mohan Mia

A pioneer among politicians

ENAMUL HAQ

IF any politician of this country is to be remembered for uncommon qualities of head and heart and for nearly half a century of dedicated and selfless public service, the name of Yusuf Ali Chowdhury, known to most people as Mohan Mia, comes to the fore. He died on 26 November 1971 at the age of only 66 when his dream to make a significant contribution to building the new country of Bangladesh remained unfulfilled. He knew from his own commitment to the cause of Bengali language and the issue of political, economic and social justice for the Bengalis that liberation was imminent and it would need all the wisdom and efforts of the people and the political leaders to reconstruct the shattered land and take it on to the path of progress and prosperity. The post-liberation Bangladesh surely needed the services of an extraordinarily wise, selfless and incorruptible politician like Mohan Mia.

From his early age, he grew up in the district town of Faridpur, as a courageous and visionary person. Instead of letting the riches of the family zamindari spoil him, he fixed his eyes on the ways to lift the Muslims from the morass of social and economic backwardness. Compared to the educated, more affluent and influential Hindus, the Muslims lived almost as outcasts with no voice to ask for their rights. He soon found out that their aversion to education, particularly English education under the British



With his close association with Shere-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq, Husein Shahid Suhrawardy and Nurul Amin, he could become a minister any time but instead he opted to become a king maker and not a decorated member of the king's court.

In 1937 he decided for the first time to contest for a seat in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. But from where? Despite stiff opposition from his family members and friends, he gave away his own safe and secure constituency within his zamindari in favour of Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan, regarded by him as his political guru. This was a very rare gesture demonstrating his large heartedness and respect for a person, who, he thought, was more qualified to serve the people. He chose for himself the Shibchar-Sadarpur-Bhanga constituency to challenge powerful zaminder Choudhury Shamsuddin Ahmed, known as Badshah Mia of Duttapara.

Mohan Mia won the seat. Fazlul Huq formed the government in Bengal in coalition with the Muslim League. But in 1941 he severed his ties with the Muslim League and formed a new government in association with the Congress. Mohan Mia stayed on in the League and played a significant role in the party. Fazlul Huq was angry but Mohan Mia did not budge from his stand. Despite political differences with many, Mohan Mia never kept anyone away from his personal respect or denied his family's traditional hospitality. Many famous politicians of India and Pakistan including Congress and Muslim League leaders visited Faridpur on different occasions and enjoyed the generous hospitality at Mohan Mia's family house Moiz Manzil.

His dream to set up a jute mill in Faridpur has been fulfilled by his able sons. His other dream to set up a sugar mill became a reality, thanks to the efforts of his elder brother Muazzem Husain Choudhury (Lal Mia), who was once a well-known Congress leader and later became a central minister in Pakistan. The most important legacy of Mohan Mia still remains in the Halima Students Home in Faridpur bearing the memory of his mother.

That proved his mettle as a Muslim standing up for a cause although he was never a communal zealot. In fact, during his 17 years of chairmanship of Faridpur District Board he succeeded in keeping the entire greater district of the time free from any communal violence although the whole of British India was affected by this scourge resulting in the killing of hundreds of thousands of people of both communities. His pioneering efforts at establishing educational institutions in the district and a multi-sectoral vocational training centre on the outskirts of the district town spoke eloquently of his foresightedness for social progress.

In politics, Mohan Mia was an ardent adherent of high principles and moral values. He was a prince among politicians as he was in personal look and conduct. His love for politics without profit often threw him into personal debts forcing him to dig into his estate coffers for money. He himself led a very simple life with almost ascetic habits in eating and dressing.

Enamul Haq is a former editor of The New Nation.

THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

Bill Clinton had achieved the remarkable feat of even handedness in his dealing with Arafat and the Israeli leaders. His White House doors were open to Arafat as they were open for Rabin and Barak. President Bush continues to be surrounded by virtually the same team that he had during his just completed Presidency. It would be nothing short of a miracle if he succeeds in opening his White House doors to the Palestinians as well.

criticise Israel as it rained death and destruction upon the defenseless Palestinian civil population for three long years.

Now that President George Bush was elected convincingly, will he attempt to take a neutral stand vis-à-vis the Palestinians and the Israelis? We may recall that nearly three years ago President Bush launched his two-state proposal -- Palestine and Israel living side by side as independent states. President Bush did not attempt to push his proposal forward, rather allowed his friend Ariel Sharon to carry on his murderous spree.

untold suffering of the Palestinians and the Israelis.

I detect a ray of hope. President Bush has already dispatched to the region the outgoing Secretary of State Colin Powell, who must have impressed upon the leaders the urgency of a solution of this half century old dispute. At the age end of his first term President Bush launched the initiative of "expanded Middle East proposal". The proposal is to cover the area between North Africa and Afghanistan. The proposal appears to be flawed because the dominant issue facing the world is undoubt-

need to go over the whole ground but resume where his predecessor had left off. It is established that for any solution to be viable it must address the question of Jerusalem.

Ariel Sharon had so imposed upon President Bush that he could not even shake the hand of Yasser Arafat. Now that Arafat has left this world the problem of hand shake has been resolved. Ariel Sharon has long established himself as the inflexible hawk and has been associated with brutal repression of Palestinians. His name is remembered by all for the massacre of Palestinians in Shabra and

Arshad-uz-Zaman is a former Ambassador.

GM technology: Advancement or regression?

DIHIDER SHAHRIAR KABIR

IN genetically modified organism (GMO) replacement of gene of an organism is brought about by a desired gene even from another species. Nevertheless, the whole process is very complex and reliant on recombinant DNA technology i.e. the desired modification is only brought about by adopting a special method of molecular biology. GMOs are widely used, for example, in construction of industrially important bacteria, altering the genotypes of plants, production of specialised drugs and vaccines, and also in agricultural and food industries.

produced. So far a few corporations such as Monsanto, Astra Zeneca, Dupont, etc. have spent billions of dollars on this research project.

Though America is the birthplace of GM technology, by now the technology has become widespread. For instance, soybean is a popular GM crop all over the world and so is corn. Biotechnology is also adopted in insulin production. The gene,

in addition to the list is rice. Though the arrival of GM food in the market raised an upheaval in the mid nineties, during the spring of 1999 the controversy rooted itself in America. The debate started with the continuous detrimental effects of GM crop on the larvae of the monarch butterfly. In late 1998, European Union incited a regulation on labeling of GM food. The Argentine farmers

is still lagging behind. China on the other hand remains enigmatic regarding their GMO technology adoption, yet has permitted almost 50 species of GM crop.

Cultivation of GM plant crop is still the largest in the US. In 2002, I got an opportunity to attend an international seminar on environmental issues held at Michigan State University. Though the seminar was

of this apprehension. There was an extensive research on GM technology in agriculture prior to its implementation in commercial market. The result published in September was based on the research data collected from two hundred fields extending from North England to North Scotland. A total of four thousand fields were visited from where half a million seeds and 1.5 million insects and other invertebrates were collected after being surveyed.

Afterwards this was published in a popular journal under the Royal Society. A summary of the survey was also published as a top story in the popular daily The Independent. The research has also stated that after the intensive farming project, GM crop cultivation may cause another sharp decline in diversity of useful herbs, insects, flowers, and animals. The research was on GM crop of oilseeds, sugar beet, and maize, and the result implies severe degradation of natural wild life. The concern of the advisors from Wild Life Conservation of English Nature was conclusively proved with this research.

That is why the promotion of Golden Rice of IRRRI in Bangladesh alarmed us, in the same way as imported soybean from North and South America does. Corn and other GM foods are not different. Introducing GM crop in our agricultural fields will not only cause reduction in the genetic diversity of around five thousand plant species, but will also take away the poor farmer's right of seed preservation. Hence it is essential to modify the bio-safety guideline with reference to the latest scientific research.

primarily based on American and Western research, other issues such as scientific progress, adoption of national policies, and various global environmental concerns were also important motifs discussed in the consultation. After presentation of my research paper, two participants sent across questions and among them one was a young professor from Michigan State University. The professor had an ongoing research on GM cucumber. Unfortunately when she showed interest in extending her research to Bangladesh I had to refuse her with disconsolation.

In the next session, the professor from Michigan State University presented a keynote paper highlighting her research on GM cucumber and its success. The professor who is also a gold medalist gracefully brought up the success story of GM technology on crops. While the professor was highlighting the merits of GMO technology among an attentive audience, I put across three questions on those.

My inquiries were very simple and were not yet established on scientific research. In general the issue of transfer of gene from one species to another is ethical. Hence I asked whether this change creates any imbalance in the genetic diversity of

Introducing GM crop in our agricultural fields will not only cause reduction in the genetic diversity of around five thousand plant species, but will also take away the poor farmer's right of seed preservation. Hence it is essential to modify the bio-safety guideline with reference to the latest scientific research.

For pharmaceutical and food industry the procedure is different from that of GMO produced in agricultural industry. But GMO of crop (plant) brought a lot of chaos throughout the world during the late 90s. The research on GM crop takes about sixty species of plants of human consumption with a total of 20 species already being commercially

producing insulin in human body, is introduced in bacterial cell and 10,000L of this produces only 20 per cent insulin after fermentation. Only one Lilly plant (indigenous species) can produce enough insulin for all Americans.

The list of GM crop in America is very long including cucumber, apple, tomato, papaya, and so on. A new

we're already observing the production of GM crop, however the same was not happening in Brazil. Many of the Brazilian states have enforced law to make them independent of GM crop production.

Japan and UAE have adopted GM food labeling and regulation and India has also taken up some precautionary steps, but Bangladesh

that GM crop is environmentally friendly, as it does not require pesticides, organic fertilisers or chemical fertilisers for its production. On the other hand, many people have often characterised GM crop as an invasive species. Moreover after the death incident of a useful insect like Monark Butterfly on Bt Maize (GM crop) at the research laboratory of Colonel University, it was apparent that the fright and concern regarding this issue would increase.

Therefore, the occurrence of toxicity in GM crop cannot be ignored. In fact the risk of degrading the nutrition source from soil microorganisms inevitably increases. In addition, the chance of cross-pollination between modified crop and natural/pure species resulting in another gene remains. At the end I put across the question that whether in the name of production should we be captivated in the hands of few powerful corporation like Monsanto/Novartis. In that case are the urban policy makers not deceiving us and in the near future will we lose our traditional preservation techniques, which has existed for decades now among the farmers?

The British government has invested 5.5 million pound sterling in GM crop trials to find out the causes

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Call for Registration for ICRCTR

This is for general information that the Registration for the forthcoming "International Conference on Regional Cooperation on Transboundary Rivers: Impact of the Indian River-linking Project (ICRCTR)" due to be held from 17th to 19th December 2004 at Dhaka is going on. More than 500 experts & activists including around 100 from abroad are expected to participate in the conference.

Interested persons are requested to register themselves immediately by filling out a prescribed registration form available at the Conference Secretariat at BAPA Office, 9/12, Block-D, Lalmatia, Dhaka-1207, Tel: 8128024, 8113469, e-mail: bapa@scnbd.org or the conference web site (www.bapa.info) and submitting the same to the secretariat between 10:00am to 6:00pm everyday. The registration fee is BDT 500.00 (Taka five hundred) or US\$10.00 (US dollar ten) only & may be paid in cash or a cross cheque in favour of "International conference on RCTR" along with the registration form.

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SENA KALYAN BHABAN (21ST Floor)
195, MOTIJHEEL C/A, DHAKA-1000.
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LOCAL / INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from Manufacturers / Suppliers / Contractors for supply of Cold Rolled Grain Oriented Silicon (CRGOS) Steel sheet strip for manufacturing of Transformer by the Sena Kalyan Electric Industries, 64/73, Baizid Bostami Road, Chittagong-4209.

Tender schedule will be available in the Accounts Division, Sena Kalyan Sangstha, Sena Kalyan Bhaban (21st Floor), 195, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 on payment of Tk. 500/- (five hundred) per set (Non refundable). The Earnest Money equivalent to 1% of the total quoted amount in the form of Pay Order / Demand Draft / Bank Guarantee in favour of Sena Kalyan Sangstha, Dhaka from any schedule bank of Bangladesh is to be submitted alongwith the offer. The offer will not be accepted for scrutiny / vetting without Earnest Money.

The tender will be received in the Tender Box kept in the office of the Procurement & Development Directorate, Sena Kalyan Sangstha, Sena Kalyan Bhaban (21st Floor), 195, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 up to 12-00 noon on 20 December 2004. The tender will be opened on the same day at 12-30 PM in presence of available bidders (if any). The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Director
Procurement & Development
Sena Kalyan Sangstha

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Sealed offers are invited by Managing Director, National Tubes Ltd for supply of Hot Rolled Steel Strips for manufacturing of Water Line Pipe, on C&F(C) Chittagong & C&F(C) Benapole basis:

| Reference No | Quantity and description of goods | Earnest money of | Price of tender documents | Closing/opening date and time | Source of finance |
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| COM(1)/STRIPS-1500/04 | 1500 MT Hot Rolled Steel Strips (Quantity may be increased or decreased) | US\$11,000/- or Tk 6,50,000/- | Tk 2000.00 (Taka two thousand) only (non-refundable) | Closing 21-12-2004 at 11:00 AM Opening on the same day at 11:15 AM | Cash/any untied credit |

In case of unavoidable circumstances the offer will be received on the next working day and opened on the same place and time. Tender documents may be obtained during working hours (excepting on opening date) on cash payment from the following offices & the offers will also be received and opened in the Purchase Dept of the same offices:

1) The Chief Accounts Officer, National Tubes Ltd, Tongi, Gazipur.
2) The Controller of Accounts, Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation, "BSEC BHABAN," 102, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215.

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