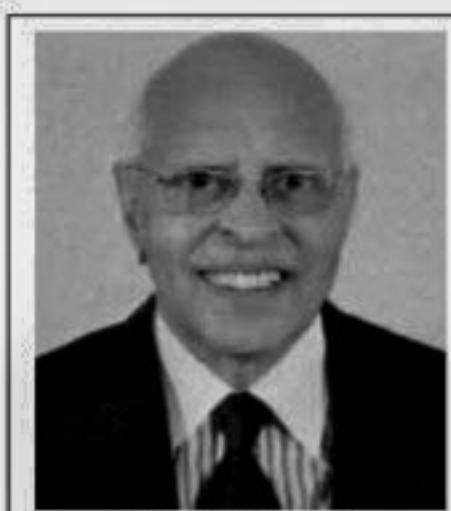


BOTTOM LINE

Bangladesh-Japan together at 40



BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

JAPAN recognised Bangladesh on February 10th, 1972 and this year will mark the 40th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. A week-long function has been organised in this regard in Dhaka and Japanese investors are expected to attend it.

The Japanese Embassy was opened in Dhaka in March, 1972. Since then, Japan has been a significant development partner of Bangladesh and Bangladesh-Japan relations have grown from strength to strength over the 40 years.

The bilateral relationship goes back before the birth of Bangladesh. The Consular Mission of Japan in Dhaka, in mid-'50s, was engaged in furthering trade and people-to-people contact in the '50s and '60s made them aware of each other's culture including art, music and literature.

Soon after the opening of the Embassy in 1972, the Japanese government sent Takashi Hayakawa to Bangladesh to assess the needs of the new nation, followed by a team of Japanese experts. Japan came forward with aid, trade and investment in Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who visited Japan in October 1973, had laid the solid foundation of bilateral relations. In 1975, their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Japan visited Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's relations with Japan took a favourable turn in unusual circumstances. A hijacked Japanese airliner landed in Dhaka in October 1977, creating a crisis in Japan. The Japanese hostages were released through the skilful handling of Bangladesh government leaders, which impressed the government of Japan.

All heads of government of Bangladesh visited Japan to strengthen bilateral relations.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Japan on November 28th, 2010 for the third time at the invitation of her Japanese counterpart, and held talks on bilateral, regional and global issues.

She also held meetings with Japan's International

Cooperation Agency (JICA) President S. Ogata, Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) President Y. Hayashi, Japan-Bangladesh Committee for Commercial Economic Cooperation (JBCCEC) and Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI).

Bangladesh sent a search-cum-rescue team with relief goods including medicines to Japan after the devastating earthquake and tsunami in March last year. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni donated a cheque of \$1 million to the then Japanese ambassador on behalf of private mobile operators in the country.

The foreign minister said: "Whenever Bangladesh became the victim of natural disasters, Japan came forward to assist us. Now time is for us to stand for our

conglomerate of Japan's Export-Import Bank and Japan's Official Aid Agency, is a key player in channeling development assistance to Bangladesh. Japan's official development assistance has three components: grant aid, technical cooperation and loans.

The Meghna Bridge was built at the cost of \$7.9 billion with Japanese assistance. This is perhaps the single largest project with Japanese assistance anywhere in the world. JICA has further committed to provide funds of \$400 million for the Padma Bridge.

JICA has committed to provide Tk.490 crore as budgetary support for the next three years to cope with environment related disasters and will cancel a debt of Tk.700 crore from its Debt Cancellation Fund. JICA

towards Japan. Export from Bangladesh to Japan in fiscal year 2010 expanded by 60% compared to the previous fiscal year. In response to requests from Bangladesh, Japan relaxed rules of origin of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) in April 2011. As a result, an increase in export from Bangladesh to Japan is expected.

The number of Japanese companies that have invested in Bangladesh has risen to 107 as of April 2011 (JETRO statistics). Economists suggest that to attract FDI from Japan in Bangladesh, South Asian markets should be integrated through regional connectivity.

It is reported that Japan is keen to set up an industry in Bangladesh to manufacture instruments that would be used in the spaceships, including all types of devices required to launch satellites into the space.

Japan's assistance has underscored the development of economic infrastructures like roads, bridges, power transmission etc. It is suggested that the concentration of the Japanese help should be more on human development so that the people can be more independent and will be able to do things on their own in the long run. Japanese assistance needs to include water, food security and climate change in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh-Japan relations are not confined only to economic matters. Bangladesh folk music has been very popular in Japan, and Japanese folk music Min'yo enthralled Dhaka audience on December 9th, 2009.

On February 3rd, Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E. Shiro Shadoshima reportedly termed Bangladesh as a country of potentialities. He said: "This country has progressed much in all sectors in the forty years of liberation and I remember the martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the war of liberation with deep respect."

An important characteristic of Bangladesh's relationship with Japan is the way in which the diversification of bilateral economic relationship has grown. With the passing of time, the solid foundation of friendship and cooperation built during the forty years will be further strengthened in future for mutual benefit.

The writer is a former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

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trusted friend." Though the aid is not so significant, it demonstrates the affection of the people of Bangladesh for the Japanese people.

In 2009, State Foreign Secretary of Japan Ms. Seiko Hashimoto visited Bangladesh and disclosed that Bangladesh was included as a part of the Japanese prime minister's flagship project "Cool Earth Partnership" at a time when global climate change has been having adverse effects on Bangladesh.

Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC), a

will provide a loan of up to \$63 million to the "Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Improvement Project" of the Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Development Programme.

Japan is keen to support the power sector in Bangladesh after formulation of the ongoing comprehensive power development master plan for attaining stable power supply up to 2030.

The amount of two-way trade varies between \$500-700 million per year and the balance is heavily inclined

The inconvenient truth US-Pakistan divergences

SUNITA NARAIN

MANY years ago, in a desperately poor village in Rajasthan, people decided to plant trees on the land adjoining their pond so that its catchment would be protected. But this land belonged to the revenue department and people were fined for trespass. The issue hit national headlines. The stink made the local administration uncomfortable. They then came up with a brilliant game plan they allotted the land to a group of equally poor people. In this way the poor ended up fighting the poor. The local government got away with the deliberate murder of a water body.

I recall this episode as I watch recent developments on climate change. At the recent Durban climate change conference small island nations from the Maldives to Granadabelieved,

rightly so, that the world has not delivered on its promise to cut emissions and is jeopardising their future. But they do not have the power to fight the powerful. So, this coalition of climate victims turned against its partner developing countries, targeting India, for instance, for inaction. These nations pushed for India to take legal commitments to reduce emissions, dismissing its concerns of equity as inconsequential.

The divide is complete. According to Bangladeshi climate change researcher and old friend Saleemul Huq, the issue of equity in the setting of emission targets based on the contribution of each country to the stock

of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is an old-fashioned idea. He says it will not work in the new world where the dichotomy of the rich and poor countries has vanished; instead, there are equal and big polluters like China, India, South Africa and Brazil (BASIC). These, he says, are equally responsible and must take steps to cut emissions. He wants the notion of historical emissions junked. For him, countries like the Maldives and Bangladesh are victims. India is a polluter, a rich country whose government is hiding behind the poor to avoid cutting emissions.

But the fact is Maldives' per capita emission is higher than India's. So, should the Maldives take mandatory emission reductions? Is it a victim or a polluter? India also has a longer coastline than vulnerable Bangladesh. Is it a polluter? Or an equal victim? Sivan Kartha, a climate change researcher with the Stockholm Environment Institute, tears into this argument that is dividing the poor world and taking the focus away from countries that need to be told to take action fast. He compares India and Africa, countering the charge that Africa is being destroyed because of rich India's reluctance

to take emission reductions. "Actually, 1.1% of Africans have made it to the top global wealth decile against 0.9% Indians. As against this, 21% Americans are in the top global wealth decile. Then, India's total emissions are only two-thirds of what Africa emits." As against this, US emissions are four times India's. In this way, while the poor fight over crumbs, the cake is eaten by the rich.

My colleagues at the Centre for Science and Environment analysed income distribution and emissions data to see if rich Indians emitted more than their counterparts in rich countries. They found that the per capita emission of the richest 10% of India's population was the same or slightly less than the per capita emission of America's poorest 10%, and it was less than one-tenth the per capita emission of America's richest 10%. In other words, the rich in India emitted less than even the poorest Americans. This is not to deny that Mukesh

Ambani's enormous house and electricity consumption reportedly Rs.75 lakh a month is distasteful. But energy and emission apartheid in the world remains unacceptable.

Simple plot. Sinister design. The poor have been divided to fight over who is more vulnerable. But one must realise that this divide is a deliberate creation. In 2009 at the Copenhagen Conference of Parties, two categories of countries were devised. One, vulnerable countries that would get fast track funds to adapt to climate change and two, emerging polluters grouped under the BASIC banner. The bribe and divide

was blatant and successful. It was openly said in the conference plenary that polluting countries like India, who wanted an agreement based on equity, were blocking funds that would flow to Bangladesh and the Maldives. That penultimate night of the conference the poor fought the poor. Since then the divide has grown.

It's time we stopped this kindergarten fight. Let us be clear the world has to cut emissions drastically and fast. There must be limits on each country based on its per capita emission and taking into account its historical contribution. China is the biggest current emitter. But in cumulative terms taking into account the stock in the atmosphere accumulated over the years it contributes 11% against US share of 26%. It must also be brought under limits, as must India. But these limits will have to be based on the principle of equity so that these countries will also have the right to development.

This is the most inconvenient of truths. But it is the truth.

The writer is Director General of New Delhi-based research and advocacy body, Centre for Science and Environment.

KHALID AZIZ

THE US Defence Secretary, Leon Panetta, has disclosed that Dr. Shakil Afridi who ran an anti-polio campaign in Abbottabad succeeded in obtaining DNA samples that led to the discovery of Osama bin Laden and his subsequent death at the hands of US Special Forces during the May 2 raid last year.

This statement places in perspective the reasons behind the deterioration of relations between the US and Pakistan.

Underlying bin Laden's death is a raft of more serious questions. One is the report that the government commission constituted to uncover the facts about the May 2 incident has recommended a case of treason against Afridi.

Yet the UN Security Council, vide Resolution 1390 of 2002, defined Bin Laden as a proscribed person who was not to be allowed within the territory of any member state. His detection within Pakistan could therefore lead to serious repercussions that could isolate the country further.

In October 2008, Gen Petraeus said: "There is no question... that Osama bin Laden is in the tribal areas of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan." Therefore, Pakistani officials' repeated denial that they had not known of his whereabouts is considered by US officials as disingenuous at best.

To revive the credibility of the Pakistani interlocutors it has become necessary to use regular institutions such as the foreign office and parliament to define the country's foreign and security policies. The current de-institutionalised approach to the formulation of policy is harmful.

One can speculate that many of the events that have since transpired between Pakistan and the US, including the tragic episode of Salala and the upheaval caused by "memogate," are part of this sad interaction between the two countries' national security goals and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships: the breach of trust between the military leaders of the two sides plays a major role in the existing tussle. It has isolated Pakistan in terms of the Afghan peace process.

It is possible to conclude, therefore, that it was the breakdown in inter-institutional communications that was responsible for the Salala attack. The Pakistan military believes that excessive and disproportionate force was used and the attack lasted till the last soldier was killed, despite GHQ's communication with Isaf.

It may be thus fair to presume that behind the worsening US-Pakistani bilateral relations is the differing negotiating style of the representatives of the two countries.

This difference arises out of the different cultural backgrounds of the two nations, the asymmetry of the US-Pakistan relationship and Pakistan's assumption that the US will leave it to pick up the pieces after its own strategic purpose is fulfilled.

A recent review regarding the negotiating style of the two nations, Howard and Terresta Schaffer's How Pakistan Negotiates with the United States, throws light on this complex world where national, cultural and real-

politik concerns coincide.

Some of their important findings regarding the stance of Pakistani military officers in this matter are: Pakistanis insist that they will not be dictated to by India or the US, yet at the same time demand top-of-the-line US military equipment; US civilian negotiators know nothing of military matters; Pakistanis begin negotiations, blame the army's problems on the US and make their American counterparts feel guilty about Pakistan's difficulties.

The authors: "When [Pakistani] military officers are leading the government, they also play hardball, insisting that unless all their demands are met disaster of one sort or another will follow." US officials observed that the ISI routinely deceived them, and this led the CIA to develop independent links with the Afghan insurgents. Furthermore, "US negotiators should expect that inconvenient truths will be kept from them," according to the researchers.

It is thus clear that the asymmetric relationship, differing styles of negotiation and divergent strategic goals in Afghanistan have caused the US-Pakistan alliance to become dysfunctional. It would be correct to conclude that most of the divergence comes from different outcomes expected in Afghanistan after 2014.

Pakistan would like to have in place an Afghan government that is soft towards Pakistan, is Pakhtun-dominated and keeps India marginalised. The US, on the other hand, would want an effective Afghan government that rules the country well and has a strong counterterrorism capacity. The US is not committed to bringing in a Pakhtun-dominated government or one that is pro-Pakistan.

Thus, besides the strategic divergence that exists between the US and Pakistan, there is also now a severe trust deficit in terms of statement by Pakistan, particularly after the discovery of bin Laden and the denial of our alleged role in other occurrences inside Afghanistan. That this relationship is unravelling at this critical juncture, as far as Afghanistan is concerned, is unfortunate.

Although the Pakistani security narrative does not perhaps agree with this perspective neither did I, till some time ago the metrics in Afghanistan don't look too bad from the US perspective.

The surge approved by President Obama in 2009 and the night operations against the Taliban ordered by Gen. McChrystal and Gen Petraeus have successfully eliminated many of the Taliban mid-level commanders and have forced the top Taliban leadership to accept negotiations in Qatar.

However, as the last chapter of the Afghan war unfolds with the spring offensive in the eastern districts alongside Fata, it will cause Pakistan more headaches. It could result in cross-border incursions by Isaf. Ending hostilities is often more difficult than starting a war. This is yet another reason to resolve the crisis between the two nations.

The writer is chairman of the Regional Institute of Policy Research in Peshawar.

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