

# 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit: "With the People"



TAIYOUNG CHO

THE 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit will be held in Seoul on March 26-27, 2012. It is expected to be the largest summit in the security field that discusses international cooperative measures to protect nuclear materials and facilities from terrorist groups, with participation from 40 heads of states. I am pleased to share with the people of Bangladesh what the background, basic objectives, main issues to be discussed and expected outcome of 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit are.

Let me first elaborate on the background of the "2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit." It started with President Obama's speech in Prague in 2009 where he emphasised that nuclear terrorism was a serious threat to international security, and expressed his will to lead global efforts to protect nuclear materials as part of his plan to realise his vision of a "world free of nuclear weapons." Following upon President Obama's speech, the first Nuclear Security Summit, the largest international meeting relating to the nuclear issue, was held in Washington in April 2010. The leaders discussed plans to strengthen nuclear security by preventing the misuse of nuclear materials by non-state actors.

Against this backdrop, the Republic of Korea will host the second Nuclear Security Summit on March 26-27, 2012. Today, radioactive materials that can be utilised to make as many as 130,000 nuclear weapons are scattered around the globe. The objective of the Nuclear Security Summit is to prevent such nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorist groups. Moreover, it is aiming at ultimately making a world without nuclear weapons by reducing the amount of nuclear materials around the world to a minimum level and tightening control over them.

As the largest high-level forum in the security sector and the largest international summit

hosted by Korea, this year's summit will be attended by 40 heads of states and four chiefs of international organisations. The participating states represent 80% of the global population as well as 90% of the world's GDP. President Barack Obama of the United States, President Hu Jintao of the People's Republic of China, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev are expected to attend, along with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Yukiya Amano, and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy.

Now, what are the main issues to be discussed at the summit? The most important outcome of the 2010 summit was the shared recognition among heads of state of the urgency and seriousness of the threat of nuclear terrorism, and the

of nuclear safety measures will be on the agenda as well.

With these objectives in mind, Seoul Communiqué is expected to be adopted at the end of the summit. As the safe management of nuclear materials is the most important concrete measure for reducing the threat of nuclear terrorism, the Seoul Communiqué will first outline the goal of minimising stocks and use of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. Other issues addressed will include the nexus between nuclear security and nuclear safety, strengthening of international cooperation to prevent illicit trafficking, sharing of advanced technology with developing countries, and a call for more countries to commit to international agreements and initiatives dealing with nuclear security.

The Seoul Communiqué and the measures it outlines comprise a declaration of political commitment, not a legally binding mandate. Nonetheless, as an agreement signed and adopted at the head-of-state level, the implementation of its measures will be very important. In Washington in 2010, some 30 states publicly pledged their commitment to carry out specific measures for improving nuclear security. Today, most of these states have fulfilled their commitment and are actually in the process of introducing new measures.

I wish to conclude by emphasising what Korea is focusing on with 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit: "With the People." Throughout the preparation process, the Korean government has emphasised the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit as one to be carried out "with the people." This goal will define our efforts in the days ahead, as we

work to educate the public regarding nuclear security and its importance and relation to our daily lives. Continuing in the success of the 2010 G20 Summit, as well as last year's High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, we will work together with participating states to make this a productive and substantive event.

The writer is Ambassador of the Republic of Korea. This article is exclusive to *The Daily Star*.



CHRIS HEPBURN

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subsequent rallying of political commitment to addressing the issue. Seoul will provide a setting for the discussion of concrete measures for realising the goals outlined in Washington, namely, combating the threat of nuclear terrorism, protecting nuclear materials and related facilities, and preventing illicit trafficking of nuclear materials. With heightened international interest in nuclear safety since the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident in March 2011, expansion

## SHIFTING IMAGES

# Birth of a column



MILIA ALI

THIS month my weekly column "Shifting Images" celebrates its first anniversary. The column started fortuitously when the Editor and Publisher of this paper asked if I could write about unfolding events pertaining to social issues from the perspective of a Bangladeshi immigrant living in the USA. For a while I pondered

over the offer given the enormity of the challenge. After all, it is quite intimidating to face a readership that is perceptive, erudite and discerning. But, I decided to take the plunge into the world of writing since it offered enormous opportunities for finding a voice --even if a feeble one -- to express an opinion on contemporary social concerns and controversies.

Today, looking back on the past year I believe that, overall, it's been a beautiful journey of self-discovery! Ordinary happenings, which I always took for granted, became sources of inspiration and introspection. Each blossoming bud heralded a new idea and each falling leaf triggered a brainwave. My new vocation helped me to look at the world with renewed empathy and wonder: empathy for the squalour and wonder at its magnificence. And, best of all, I learned to stretch my imagination to untested boundaries.

True to its intention, "Shifting Images" is a kaleidoscope offering the reader images of the varied and shifting patterns of our daily existence. I have consciously tried to steer away from heavy, analytical pieces on politics or economics or religion. I try to write about mundane, everyday occurrences in the lives of ordinary folks seen from the prism of my limited exposure to diverse cultures and peoples. Not preach or judge, but simply present a perspective that might be somewhat different, coming from someone who has firm roots in her country of origin and at the same

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time appreciates the freedom and flexibility in the country she has adopted.

For me this column has been an incredible adventure of sights, sounds and introspection. Reflecting and writing about the cherry blossoms in spring and the falling autumn leaves, I connected with nature. In my endeavours to transform these rare images into words, I spent hours soaking my soul in the sound of the pattering rain and the silence of the azure sky.

At times, some of you may have felt that reading about life in the United States may not be directly relevant to the issues and problems that are encountered in Bangladesh. I am conscious of this and have tried to project aspects of human life that relate to the common man, wherever he may be. I sincerely believe that no matter what, compassion and camaraderie should not be dictated by national and cultural boundaries. Despite the many issues that divide nations and races today, thankfully, we don't need a passport to transport goodwill. Sharing information and knowledge about different people and cultures succeeds in breaking artificial barriers of mistrust. Whether we live in DC or Dhaka, most of us aspire for lives where we are assured of our basic needs and a hassle-free, secure existence.

Just as writing a weekly column is a rewarding experience with limitless opportunities to be creative, it is also a painstaking task that requires discipline and unwavering commitment. We columnists live by tight deadlines and need to satisfy the high expectations of our readership since each week we are under the critical gaze of our audience. As soon as Monday arrives I experience an underlying anxiety to search for an appropriate topic and wonder if I will be able to find the inspiration to finish the piece in time. Thankfully, nothing concentrates the mind better than stress and very soon I get cracking. By Thursday the column is sent shooting through cyberspace...across continents... to the Op-ed Editor at *The Daily Star*, whose encouragement and patience has sustained my enthusiasm in this venture.

Finally, there remains an unfulfilled desire. I miss the direct feedback from my readership, since the process of writing is not interactive. However, the limited positive and constructive suggestions I receive once in a while has been a great source of strength and encouragement. I am realistic enough to understand that I cannot bring about an earth shattering change -- I will be happy if I can continue to create a tremor or two. And, if somewhere along your daily routine, my columns give you cause for reflection and raise some incisive questions, I will have achieved my goal!

The writer is a renowned Rabindra Sangeet exponent and a former employee of the World Bank.

# From Cubs to Tigers

SHAHANA SIDDIQUI

Dear Tigers,

WHAT an unbelievable tournament! I was privileged and honoured to have witnessed all of you making history in the last three matches (BAN vs IND, BAN vs SL, and of course BAN vs PAK). Like millions of Bangladeshis, I cheered during the boundaries, jeered when the extras were given, cried when those 2 runs became too far, and stood up clapping with great pride at my national team that has truly come of age. What made us even more emotional during this tournament was to see all of you play like a real team. There was respect and unity for each other which, to be honest, we had not seen before. You played strength by strength and every player contributed to the team's achievements. For a nation that is divided on so many grounds, it was the Tigers and their united front that brought 160 million people together under the same banner. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for playing like the Tigers you really are!

When my friends and I first got into cricket in the early 1990s, we grew up watching foreign teams, in particular India and Pakistan. I remember being fascinated at the age of 11 by a teenage Indian batsman who played his first World Cup in 1992. The likes of Sachin Tendulkar, Waqar Yunus, Brian Lara were our heroes. Even after we qualified at the ICC, I am not going to lie, given



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the national team's past performance, I followed my favourite team South Africa's matches more than Bangladesh's ones!

But that is no longer the case. Now, it is amazing to watch my four year old son scream at the top of his lungs for his favourite cricketer, our very own Shakib al Hasan. Everything, from the Bangladesh cricket jersey to his bat and ball are "Shakibjama" "Shakib cricket"! Our children no longer need to look far for heroes, for inspiration, like the way my generation did. We have our very own Shakib, Nasir, Nazim, Mushfiq, Mashrafe, Tamim, Jahurul, (and yes, Shahadat, you too!)

Sports is crucial for healthy and wholesome upbringing of children and I feel that with the lack of strong national teams in the various

sports we play, we have not invested enough on clubs, teams, and even neighbourhood playgrounds. Sports not only keep young ones physically fit, but research shows that children who play a sport do less drugs, have more discipline in their lifestyle and do well in their studies. Sports celebrities therefore can have strong influence on children's minds and choices. We look to our national cricket team not only for entertainment, but also see each individual player as spokesperson for the millions of children who want to have the chance to run with a hockey stick, hold a bat, kick a football, swim the distance, climb the mountains. It is from that very sparkle I see in my son's eyes when he watches his favourite player on the field that I beg of you as a mother, as a fellow citizen, to uphold values that children like my son can look up to.

In recent times, the world of international cricket has been tainted with misdeeds of a few. Cricket truly is an amazing sport that can be restored to its old glory. We the citizens, the parents, look to you to restore the faith lost. You have proven to the world that not money or greed but perseverance, dedication, and team effort have made you into the roaring tigers of South Asian cricket! The loss has gained you the hearts of millions! As long you keep playing like the way you did during this Asia Cup, we, your fans, will keep roaring behind you!

The writer is a cricket fan.