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An initiative for Diplomats

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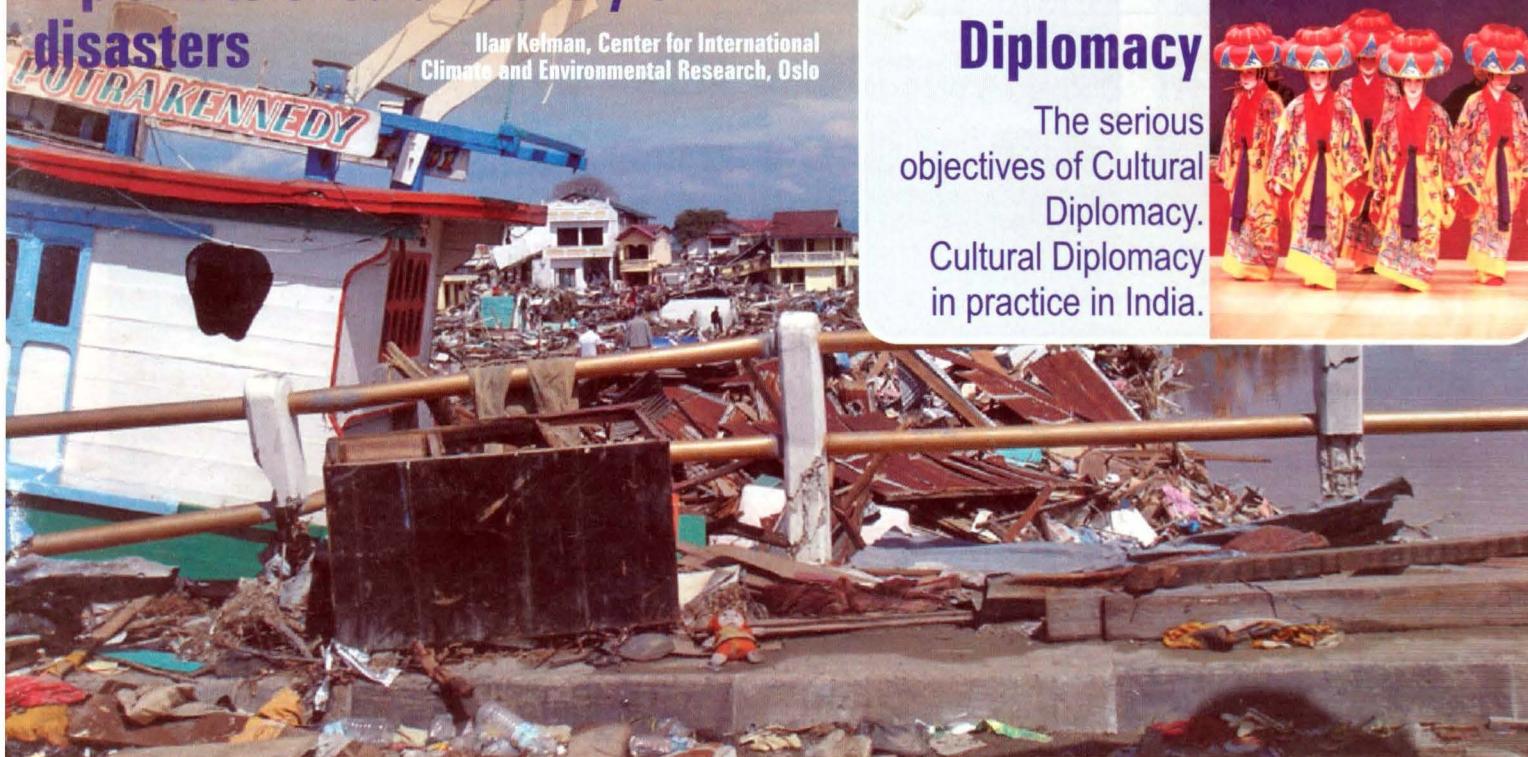
*Magazine on Foreign Affairs and International Relations.
A monthly on the Art and Practice of Diplomacy*

**Recent developments in India's
Foreign Policy by Pranab
Mukherjee, India's Minister of
External Affairs**

Disaster Diplomacy

**Diplomats should not rely on
disasters**

Ilan Kelman, Center for International
Climate and Environmental Research, Oslo



NEWS:

Former Indian
Envoy, **Sheel
Kant Sharma**
is appointed
Secretary General
SAARC



Cultural Diplomacy

The serious
objectives of Cultural
Diplomacy.
Cultural Diplomacy
in practice in India.



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Sheel Kant Sharma

Sheel Kant Sharma is appointed Secretary General, SAARC

CAREER PROFILE

Academic Background:

- Master of Science (Nuclear Physics) from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai (1971).
- Ph.D. (High Energy Physics) from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai (1974).

Professional Background:

July 1973 : Joined Indian Foreign Service.
1976-77 : Served as Third Secretary/Second Secretary in Kuwait/Saudi Arabia.
1978-81 : Under Secretary in the Middle East desk, at MEA covering various stages countries from Iran, Iraq to North Africa.
1981-82 : Fellow in the Institute of Defence Studies & Analysis (IDSA), N. Delhi.
1982-83 : Deputy Secretary (North), MEA, dealing with Nepal and Bhutan.
1983-86 : First Secretary (Disarmament), Permanent Mission of India, Geneva.
1986-89 : Counsellor, Embassy of India, Algiers.
1989-91 : Director (United Nations Division) and Disarmament Head, MEA.
1991-94 : Joint Secretary (South & Disarmament), Ministry of External Affairs dealing with ASEAN, Indo-China and South Pacific.
1994-2000 : Deputation to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna in External Relations & Policy Coordination Division.
Sept.2000- : Joint Secretary (Disarmament & International Security Affairs), covering all
July 2003 disarmament issues, bilateral security dialogues and Dialogues on nuclear
non-proliferation, export controls and defence Cooperation, regional security
forums such as ARF, CICA and other ad hoc groupings.
July 2003 : Additional Secretary (International Organisations), Ministry of External Affairs
28 July 2004 : Ambassador of India to Austria and Permanent Representative of India
20 Jan. 2008 to International Organisations in Vienna.
From March 2008 : Secretary-General of the South Asian Association for Regional
Cooperation (SAARC), Kathmandu, Nepal.

Publications:

- # Research articles in Physical Review-D (1971), Physical Review Letters (1972).
- # Articles in newspapers and periodicals (Times of India, Mainstream and Sunday) on nuclear disarmament issues.
- # As Member of the UN Study Group on Verification (1989-91) co-authored the UN Report on Verification in 1991.
- # As Member of the UN Study Group on Defensive Security Concepts (1991-93), co-authored the UN Report on Defensive Security Concepts.
- # Wrote a UNIDIR Monograph on Verification of Fissile Materials Cut-Off and Non-use of Nuclear Weapons (1992).
- # Article in the IAEA Bulletin - 1995.
- # Paper presented at the Pugwash Conference on Energy in Malta (1995).
- # Co-authored UN panel's report on missile in all their aspects in 2002.

In the month of March 2008, former Indian Envoy to Austria, Sheel Kant Sharma took over as the Ninth Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Kathmandu. Mr. Sharma is 53 years old and is an energy expert.

Reports inform that Sheel

Kant Sharma replaced Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji who became the SAARC Secretary General in the year 2003.

The Chief of SAARC is selected on a rotational basis and in the previous SAARC Summit held in New Delhi, it was decided that Mr. Sharma will succeed Mr. Dorji.

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Speaker of the Slovak National Council Pavol Paška visits India



Pavol Paška

A Press Release sent to Imprint by the Slovak Mission informs that at the invitation of the Honourable Speaker of Lok Sabha, the Honour-

able Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Pavol Paška came on an official visit to India from 10th to 14th March 2008. The high level Slovak delegation includes members of parliament, three heads of regional parliament and other dignitaries. The Honourable Speaker had bilateral discussion with the Honourable Speaker of Lok Sabha, Honourable Vicepresident of India and the Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha.

Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic held official talks on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual concern. The two sides expressed satisfaction with the mutually beneficial cooperation and partnership between India and Slovakia encompassing political dialogue, economic. Both sides noted that bilateral trade between the two countries had virtually tripled between 2003 and 2007.

Heads of parliaments noted the importance of Parliamentary exchanges and expressed the vision that

the enhanced exchanges between the India-Slovakia Parliamentary Friendship Group will open the next fruitful chapter of Indo-Slovak parliamentary relations, and in a constructive manner, would be conducive to strengthening our bilateral relationship. The Honourable Speaker of the NC SR presented his invitation to the Hon'ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha to visit Slovakia. The invitation was accepted with thanks. During the deliberations the Honourable Speaker of the NC of SR also emphasized the importance of further activation of the exchange of high-level bilateral visits, including at the level of Head of State and Head of Government.

Both speakers reaffirmed their commitment to the UN and underlined the need for reform of this crucial international structures to reflect global realities. They also expressed the importance of early reform of the UNSC, including its expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories. The delegation also visited Agra and Chennai.

Indian visa centre launches operations in Shanghai

Media reports inform that an Indian Visa Centre launched operations in Shanghai on March 5, 2008. Indian Consul General, Vishnu Prakash inaugurated the Visa centre.

This visa centre would accept applications from the residents in three Chinese cities. The Indian Consul General mentioned that visas issued by the Consulate in Shanghai had doubled over the past two years and were poised

to cross 30,000 during this year.

The report also informs that the India Visa Application Facilitation Centre (IVAC), run by a private firm, would take up visa applications from residents in Shanghai, Zhejiang and Jiangsu, the Indian consulate in Shanghai said. Satellite centres would come up at Hangzhou and Nanjing in eastern China. The report informed that Beijing IVAC became functional in January this year.



Indian Consul General in Shanghai, Vishnu Prakash (fourth from left) inaugurating the new Visa Centre

Address India Visa Application Center

1/F, Guangdong Development Bank Tower, No. 555 Xujiahui Road, Shanghai.

Helpline: 021-6390 1198, E-mail ID: infosha@vfs-india.com.cn, Website: www.vfs-india.com.cn

US Consulate General celebrates diversity with "African-American Utsav"

As per the media reports, US Consular Chief Glen Keiser inaugurated the U.S. Consulate General's "African-American Utsav" on February 19, 2008 at the American Center in Mumbai.

Media reports inform that February is Black History Month in the United States and the US Consulate General, in cooperation with the Katha Centre for Film Studies, honored this celebration with an "African-American Utsav" at the American Center from February 19-26. Highlights of the Utsav included film screenings, dramatic readings, slide shows, and

discussions.

Like Black History Month, the American Center's "African-American Utsav" is intended to honor the struggles and triumphs of millions of American citizens over the most devastating obstacles – slavery, prejudice, and poverty – as well as their contributions to the nation's cultural and political life.

"During Black History Month, the United States celebrates the many contributions African Americans have made, while being reminded of their courage in their struggle to change the hearts and minds of our citizens. While much



Rhys Sebastian D'Souza giving a Jazz performance at the inauguration of "African-American Utsav" in Mumbai.

progress has been made, Americans continue to work together to achieve

the promise and vision of the United States," Keiser said during his remarks.

Ambassador Zhang Yan comments on India-China relationship



Chinese Ambassador to India, Zhang Yan

Chinese Ambassador to India, Zhang Yan, has said that India and China were partners in development but added that there were 'others' who were 'not quite happy' with the growing bilateral relationship between India and China.

The Chinese Ambassador indicated that the increasing linkages between India and China were causing discomfort in some quarters. "Maybe, there are people who are not quite happy about the current development of our bilateral relations. However, the growth of friendship and cooperation between our two peoples and two countries is a trend of the time," he said at a reception by an NGO.

The Chinese Ambassador was trying to convey that there is more consensus than differences. "China and India are partners of development instead of rivals. There is enough space for the two countries to grow and prosper together," Mr Zhang said.

A media report informs

that the Chinese envoy further said that his country was looking for new means to expand trade and economic cooperation and would work with India to create a 'favourable political conditions.' "The relationship between China and India has gone well beyond the bilateral context and acquired global and strategic dimension in importance," he said, and added, "It has injected new impetus to the development of our bilateral relations and provided a historical opportunity for our two countries to work together for the betterment of our people and the world as a whole."

He, however, acknowledged that 'sensitive issues' remain but added that bilateral ties are expanding on a fast track.

Free Medical Camp for the Indians

The Consulate General of India, Jeddah in co-operation with Rafa Medical Center, Jeddah reportedly organized a free medical camp for the Indian nationals at the Consulate premises on 13th March, 2008 (Thursday) from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

The Saudi-Kerala Pharmacists Forum reportedly distributed free medicines during the camp. All interested Indian nationals were invited to avail this facility.



◀ Indian Ambassador to Thailand, Latha Reddy arrives at the Bangkok Gems & Jewellery Fair on Feb 28th 2008 Organized at Impact Arena, Exhibition and convention center, Muang Thong Thani

The Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Agriculture, Shri Sharad Pawar alongwith the Agriculture Minister of Afghanistan, Obaidullah Ramin, the Agriculture Secretary, Bhutan, Sherub Gyaltsen, the Minister of Agriculture Development of Sri Lanka, Malthropala Sirisena and the Chairman Steering Committee of the Conference, Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu at the Science-based Agricultural Transformation towards Alleviation of Hunger and Poverty in SAARC Countries, in New Delhi on March 05, 2008



◀ The Home Secretary level talks, between India and Myanmar were held in New Delhi on March 07, 2008. The talks were chaired by the Union Home Secretary, Shri Madhukar Gupta and the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs of Myanmar, Brig. Gen. Phone Swe.

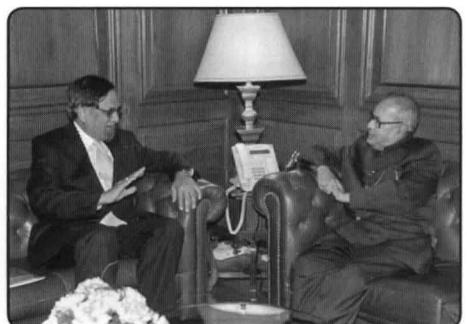
The Union Minister of External Affairs, Shri Pranab Mukherjee releasing the book titled "Travelling through Conflict: Essays on Politics of West Asia", authored by the Vice President, Mohammad Hamid Ansari, in New Delhi on March 04, 2008.

The Union Minister for Panchayati Raj, Youth Affairs & Sports and Development of North Eastern Region, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar is also seen in the picture.



◀ The Minister of Economy and Finance of Romania, Mr. Varujan Vosganian meeting with the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Kamal Nath, in New Delhi on March 04, 2008

The Finance Minister of Nepal, Shri Ram Sharan Mahat meets with the Union Minister of External Affairs, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, in New Delhi on March 03, 2008.



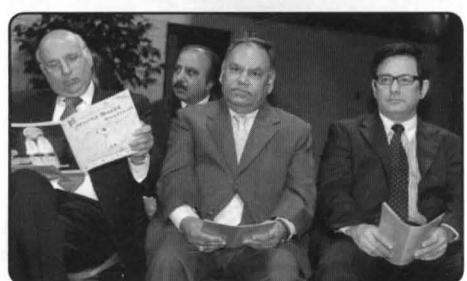
The Assistant Foreign Minister of China, He Yafei meets with the Union Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee, in New Delhi on February 29, 2008.

The speaker of Lok Sabha, Somnath Chatterjee receives the Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Dr. Kairat Umarov in Parliament House, on March 7, 2008 in New Delhi.



Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee receiving Alexander II' Ascik, the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic in Parliament House on February 28, 2008.

Consul General Ramesh Chander with Hon'ble M.P. Mohd. Sarwar of Glasgow and Consul General of Pakistan Shah m. Jamal at the inauguration of the World Sufi Festival at Glasgow on February 22, 2008



Diplomatic Quotes

“The task of developing and providing a better life for the Nepalese must go side by side, and in this endeavor, as always India would walk with Nepal at every step.”

Ambassador of India in Nepal, Shiv Shankar Mukherjee

“Indian authorities are in constant touch with their Nepali counterparts to step up vigilance in border areas. India would not tolerate activities that could adversely affect the polls in Nepal.”

Ambassador of India in Nepal, Shiv Shankar Mukherjee

“Tibet is China’s internal affair and the international community should keep out of it.”

Chinese Ambassador to India, Zhang Yan

“Tibet, let me just say that we believe that the answer for Tibet is to have a more sustainable policy for the Chinese Government concerning Tibet. I’ve spoken to my counterpart about the current situation in which there needs to be restraint, in which violence is not acceptable, but there also needs to be a day after the current events.”

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

“We must set up a team specially skilled in various languages and who can negotiate in these different tongues. They must also be fluent and sound convincing when speaking at the international level.”

Malaysian Foreign Minister, Rais Yatim

“It is now axiomatic that the need to address climate change, while allowing for continued economic growth and social development, is one of the key sustainability challenges facing the international community today.”

Australian High Commissioner to India, John McCarthy

“Sensitive issues remain... But bilateral ties are expanding on fast track.”

Chinese Ambassador to India, Zhang Yan

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Indian Ambassadors posted abroad

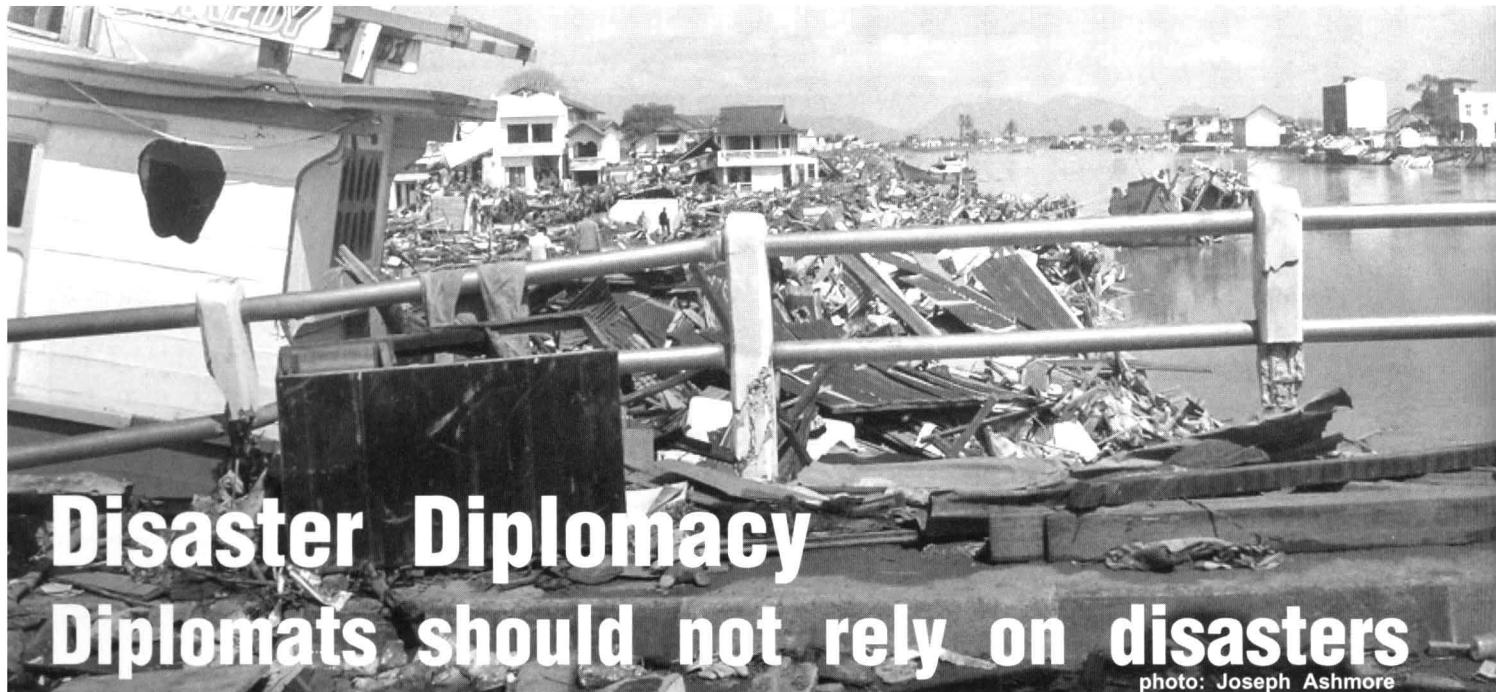
Mar 05: R R Dash to be Ambassador to Jordan

Mar 05: Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa to be Ambassador to Qatar

Mar 11: B A Roy to be Ambassador to Norway

Mar 12: M S Grover to be High Commissioner to Jamaica

Mar 28: Navtej Singh Sarna to be Ambassador of India to Israel



Disaster Diplomacy Diplomats should not rely on disasters

photo: Joseph Ashmore

In this article, Ilan Kelman explores, how and why disaster-related activities, do or do not reduce conflict and create peace. Kelman suggests that disaster-related activities can catalyze diplomacy but are unlikely to create it.

On 26 January 2001, an earthquake shook western India, killing more than 20,000 people. Almost immediately, Pakistan offered assistance which led to a summit of India's and Pakistan's leaders from 14 to 16 July 2001. Despite, or because of, high hopes and intense scrutiny, a final statement on the summit to be signed by both leaders could not be agreed. In the ensuing months, the two leaders exchanged vicious insults.

Coupled with other political influences--including the terrorism of 11 September 2001, the subsequent attack on and fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and a terrorist attack on India's parliament in December 2001--the world feared an outbreak of hostilities between the two nuclear neighbours. Then, in March 2002, a new thaw emerged in Indo-Pakistani relations with the 'earthquake diplomacy' optimism of a year earlier almost forgotten.

Why did the disaster not overcome the enmity? Is this case unique or typical? These questions are answered through the "disaster diplomacy" research project (see <http://www.disasterdiplomacy.org>). Disaster diplomacy does not refer to instances where diplomacy breaks down, goes wrong, or does not work. Instead, disaster diplomacy explores how and why disaster-related activities do and do not reduce conflict

and create peace.

The key phrase is "disaster-related activities" which refer to both pre-disaster efforts, including prevention and preparedness, and post-disaster actions, encompassing response and recovery. Disaster diplomacy has also expanded into "environmental diplomacy" seeing whether or not international environmental challenges and treaties yield diplomatic outcomes beyond the remit of the environmental issue.

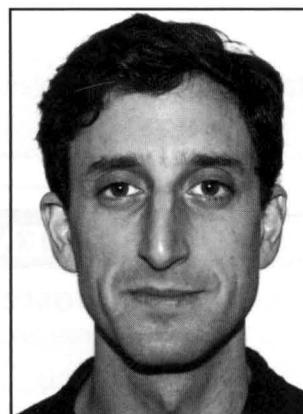
All evidence so far from work on disaster diplomacy suggests that disaster-related activities can catalyze diplomacy but are unlikely to create it. In the short-term, over weeks and months, disaster-related activities frequently have the

potential to affect diplomacy, but for that to happen, a pre-existing basis must exist for the reconciliation. That basis could be ongoing secret negotiations between political enemies or cultural and trade links, formal or informal.

For instance, the peace deal for Aceh, Indonesia is commonly linked to the tsunami of 26 December 2004 but, in fact, secret negotiations had started between the Indonesian government and the independence fighters just two days before the tsunami. The tsunami created conditions which permitted the peace deal to be successful, at least so far, but the tsunami did not create the peace deal. In the short-term, the disaster catalysed but did not create the diplomacy.

Over longer time periods, non-disaster factors have a more significant impact on diplomacy than disaster-related activities. Examples of non-disaster factors are leadership changes, mutual distrust, belief that an historical conflict or grievance should take precedence over present-day humanitarian needs, or desire for conflict.

The reality is that disasters have so far not yielded durable conflict resolution. Instead, the memory of disaster and humanitarianism soon fades, permitting the usual politics to dominate. There are even cases where a disaster threat or disaster relief has exacerbated or created



Author: Ilan Kelman
<http://www.ilankelman.org>

► conflict.

Soon after Fidel Castro seized power in Cuba in 1959--and even beyond his resignation in 2008--the USA and Cuba have considered each other to be enemies, with the political conflict turning violent on several occasions. In 1998, the worst drought to hit Cuba during Fidel Castro's reign led to Cuba requesting international assistance--as long as that aid did not come from the USA. Castro argued that the American trade embargo against his country contributed to Cuba's need for assistance as much as the drought. Meanwhile, the American government did not rush to help, considering that the disaster might destabilize Castro's regime. Yet the drought was one influence among many which led to a trade agreement between the two countries in 2000.

Then, Cuba was hit by Hurricane Michelle in 2001 and Hurricanes Dennis and Wilma in 2005, each one followed by the American government's offer of relief supplies. Cuba's responses ranged from direct snubbing to petty wrangling over the aid details. American supplies eventually did reach Cuba following Michelle, but with strong connections to the 2000 trade deal and arriving too late to be of any use for emergency response.

In between Dennis and Wilma, Hurricane Katrina devastated the

American Gulf Coast. Cuba offered assistance. For several days, the American government did not acknowledge the offer. Then, the offer was acknowledged but not accepted.

A similar lack of influence of disaster on diplomacy is seen at other times for India and Pakistan. Cyclones devastating parts of India barely influenced rapprochement between the two states, even after incidents such as in May 1999 when Pakistani authorities rescued Indian fishermen from Gujarat following a storm. Conversely, the problems in aid management that occurred following the November 1970 cyclone in East Pakistan were one trigger for the successful war of independence that produced Bangladesh.

In October 2005, hopes for earthquake diplomacy were revived after more than 70,000 people were killed in an earthquake disaster in the Kashmir area. While the "Line of Control" between India and Pakistan was opened briefly to permit people and supplies to cross, little movement beyond prior initiatives was seen in resolving the long-standing disputes related to the region. A cross-border bus service had already started earlier that year, so efforts to ease post-earthquake cross-border connections were an extension of previous initiatives. Meanwhile, political disagreements hampered the use of Indian helicopters in Pakistan

for rescue and relief.

The main reason for disaster diplomacy's continual failure is basic politics. The humanitarian imperative, the interest in avoiding disasters, and the desire for peace must compete with other priorities in political and diplomatic circles. Furthermore, linking these issues does not always lead to a successful resolution of any of them.

In fact, as seen following the 2001 earthquake disaster, ad hoc attempts at disaster diplomacy tend to collapse swiftly, causing more problems than could have been solved. Alternatively, conflict resolution should focus on the root causes of the conflict, however difficult and deep those might be, rather than assuming that a sudden event such as a disaster, or a sudden policy or decision to prevent disasters, can easily overcome long-standing enmity and concerns.

Absence of evidence for disaster diplomacy, however, is not evidence of absence of disaster diplomacy. A successful example of new diplomacy based solely on disaster-related activities may yet emerge. With the mixture of people, politics, and diplomacy, anything can happen. And then we might see headlines such as "Peace from the disaster ruins" and "Drought leads to friendship treaty".

Kairat Umarov opens the Centre for Kazakh Language and Studies

Ambassador of Kazakhstan Dr. Kairat Umarov opened the Centre for Kazakh Language and Studies on 29 March 2008 at Jamia Millia Islamia. On this occasion, Dr Umarov expressed his gratitude to Prof. Mushirul Hasan, Vice-Chancellor of JMI, for his crucial support for the idea of establishing the Centre for Kazakh Language and Studies.

The Kazakh Envoy also thanked Prof. Qamar Ghaffar, Head of the Department of Persian, who backed the initiative to launch Kazakh language course in JMI. He also acknowledged the contribution of Prof. Mansura Haidar, who first initiated

this project and has kindly arranged for a Kazakh teacher through her cooperative ties with Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty. The Kazakh Envoy also expressed gratitude towards Dr. Bulat Sultanov, Director, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies from Almaty for his kind presence at this august event. Mr. Umarov said that the opening of the centre is a special day, as it is for the first time that the Centre of Kazakh Language and Studies is established in India. At the initial stage, only the Kazakh language will be taught, later Professors from Kazakhstan and Indian universities would teach here.

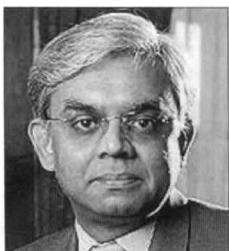


Ambassador of Kazakhstan Dr. Kairat Umarov with Prof. Mushirul Hasan, Vice-Chancellor of JMI at the opening ceremony of the Centre for Kazakh Language and Studies.

PAKISTAN

Indian High Commissioner Satyabrata Pal meets Nawaz

Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Satyabrata Pal, on March



Satyabrata Pal

3, 2008 held talks with former Pakistani premier and PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif on the emerging political situation in the country. The talks were held in Islamabad.

The meeting was held at Satyabrata Pal's residence. In this meeting, Pal reportedly conveyed the warm regards and good wishes

of the Indian leadership to Sharif and spoke of India's satisfaction at the prospect of the restoration of civilian democratic government in Pakistan.

Pal reportedly expressed his confidence that the two countries would be able to intensify their peace process. Sharif reiterated his desire to see the

neighbours living in an atmosphere of peace and mutual cooperation.



Nawaz Sharif

Canada steps up efforts to expand economic cooperation with India

Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce meeting was held in Ottawa on March 1, 2008. On this occasion, Indian High Commissioner to Canada, R L Narayan was also present.

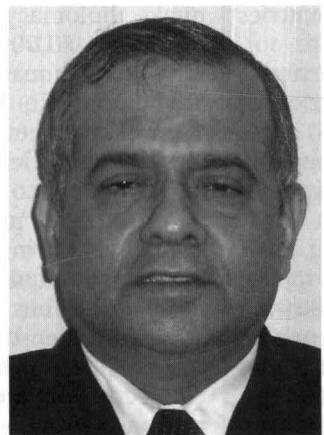
Media reports inform that R L Narayan mentioned on this occasion that the trade relations between the two nations were about to take-off and high-level exchanges at official and political level were going on.

R L Narayan on this occasion informed that there has been a rapid increase in foreign direct investment in Canada by Indian software companies. Areas of Indian investment

also included minerals, metals, pharmaceuticals, petro-chemicals, oil and gas, auto ancillaries, financial services. Narayan said that more and more Canadian companies were investing in the country as they realised that Indian economy was one of the world's fast expanding economies.

The Indian ambassador also highlighted the cooperation in field of education and said that more and more educational institutions and universities were establishing closer linkages between the people of two countries for mutual benefits.

Reports inform, Canada



Indian High Commissioner to Canada, R L Narayan

has stepped up efforts to expand economic cooperation with India. The country seeks to increase its commercial presence in the Indian market.

CHECKLIST OF STATE VISITORS

Foreign Affairs Minister of Congo (DRC)

Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi

March 11-13, 2008

Former Vice President of US

Al Gore

March 14-15, 2008

The Vice President of Tanzania

Ali Mohamed Shein

March 18-25, 2008

Minister for Public Security of Vietnam

General Le Hong Anh

March 21-25, 2008

The Senior Minister of Singapore

Goh Chok Tong

March 23-28, 2008

Agreements signed between India and Congo

A Press Release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs informs that in the month of March an agreement was signed between the two Countries for the establishment of the Indo-Congolese Joint Commission for Political, Economi-

cal, Scientific, Technical and Social-cultural Cooperation. It was signed by Pranab Mukherjee, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs and Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.



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Pavan K. Varma: Soft power is a very important pillar for diplomacy

Soft Power, it is a term used in the international relations theory to describe the ability of a political body such as a state, to directly influence the behaviour or interests of other political bodies via cultural or ideological means.

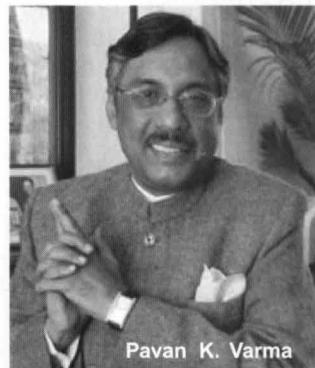
It seems India has now understood the importance of this soft power. Perhaps

this is the reason why a huge amount of Rs.750 million has been allocated to ICCR, Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

The ICCR DG, Pavan K. Varma has hailed the Indian Finance Minister, P Chidambaram's announcement to allocate Rs. 750 million to the ICCR, which is a government agency responsible for promotion

of Indian art and culture around the world. He said that Soft Power is the important pillar of diplomacy.

Rs. 750 million is a huge amount and now ICCR must make proper use of this money. Now India will hopefully project Soft Power" through greater use of films, music, dance, art and cuisine in 2008-09.



Pavan K. Varma

Liu Jieyi attends BRICs meeting

Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jieyi Attends Meeting of Vice Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Russia, India and China

On March 10 and 11, 2008, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jieyi attended a meeting of the Vice Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Russia, India and

China (BRICs) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. All parties exchanged views on the world political and economic situations and other

issues of common concern, agreeing to continue enhancing dialogue and exchanges.



Ambassador of India Deepak Bhojwani visits Cartagena

Ambassador of India in Colombia, Deepak Bhojwani, made an official visit to Cartagena 12-15 January, 2008. The Indian Ambassador called on the newly elected Governor Mr. Joaquin Berrio Villarreal and the newly elected Mayor Dr. Judit Pinedo.

The Mayor of Cartagena honoured the Ambassador and handed over a key of the city of Cartagena. The Ambassador conveyed the interest of India in Cartagena, as was evident from the recent visit of the Minister of Tourism and Culture of India, Mrs.

Ambika Soni to the city for the Conference of the World Tourism Organisation in November, 2007 and the Festival of India in Hotel Hilton in Cartagena for one week in October 2007. The Ambassador also made proposals for further collaboration with the city of Cartagena.

During his meeting with the Governor, Deepak Bhojwani proposed collaboration in economic and social areas, particularly



Ambassador of India Mr. Deepak Bhojwani receives the keys of the city of Cartagena from the mayor of the city Mrs. Judith Pinedo

relating to projects in development, utilization of higher technologies, etc. The Ambassador also invited the Governor to visit India.

Argentina A new Consulate in Mumbai

Mr Fernando Ras, the new Consul General of Argentina has already reached Mumbai and is staying (since 1 March) at Hotel Taj President (Room #617, phone 91-22-6665-0808). His Email: flrf@yahoo.com

He has experience in Economic Diplomacy. He was Director General of Export promotion in the Foreign Ministry in the last three years and had visited India with an Argentine business delegation in July 2006.

India and the prospects of strengthening India-Egypt relations

On February 17, 2008 Ambassador of India to Egypt A. Gopinathan made a presentation on February 17, at the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, Cairo. In his presentation, Ambassador Gopinathan spoke about India and the prospects for strengthening India-Egypt relations.

In his presentation, he said that the progress of India has been significant, despite persistent problems and challenges, including, external threat to security. He also added that sustaining the democratic system of governance has been the most important achievement of independent India.

"India has demonstrated that democracy and economic growth are compatible and they need not be necessarily in conflict," added the Ambassador.

Later in his presentation, A. Gopinathan spoke about the close and friendly relations between India and Egypt. "We enjoyed exceptionally close political

relations in the Fifties and the Sixties. We continue to consult and co-ordinate in the UN and other international forums; we have similarity or identity of views on most issues. Economic interaction in recent years has been intensifying. More heartening is the strengthening

of people-to-people contacts with estimated 82,500 Indians visiting Egypt in 2007, an increase of almost 35% over the 2006 figure," he added.

India and Egypt share common challenges in the area of socio-economic development. He also added that Egypt enjoys, outstanding position in

the region by virtue of its strategic location and as a center for peace, stability and security.

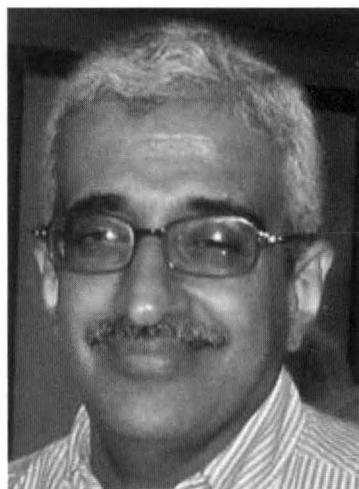
"Both Egypt and India are currently on high-growth trajectories following years of reforms and liberalisation, which have opened up new avenues for widening and deep-

ening trade and investment flows. We perceive these efforts not as a predator of natural resources, but as a partner for co-operation for mutual benefit by providing value-addition, generating local employment and contributing to the efforts of the Government of Egypt in reducing regional disparities

and developing backward areas," he added.

Ambassador Gopinathan also stated that consolidation of economic ties will inevitably lead to stronger political ties in the long run. He also said that there is information deficit regarding the awareness of the size, evolution and importance of the markets of both the countries. We have been trying to address this information deficit by encouraging visits of delegations, participation in one another's trade fairs, specialized exhibitions and organizing buyer-seller meets. We have been taking measures to facilitate travel by Egyptian businessmen to India. We pledge to continue our efforts in this direction.

He also said that Egypt's membership of COMESA opens the door to many African markets. Indian manufacturers should set up joint ventures here to create mutually beneficial partnerships.



Ambassador of India to Egypt A. Gopinathan

Bahrain

India interested in linking minimum wages with growing prices

Reports inform that India is not interested in fixing wages for the Indian workers who are going abroad to work. Reports inform that India is for the linking of minimum wages with rising prices.

India is not interested in imposing a demarcation line for minimum wages for Indian workers abroad.

Linking of minimum wages with the rising prices would enable Indian workers to save enough money to send home.

Labour strikes in Bahrain

Media reports in Gulf countries blame a series of labour strikes in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates over an alleged plan

to stipulate a minimum wage for Indian overseas workers. As per a media report, the matter had reportedly escalated after the Indian ambassador to Bahrain issued a statement that employers will have to implement a minimum wage of 100 Bahraini dinars from March 1.



Indian Ambassador to Bahrain Bikakrishna Shetty

Tibetans try to barge into the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi

Around 50 Tibetan protestors tried to barge into the Chinese Embassy building in New Delhi on March 15, 2008. As per media reports, these protestors including few women were detained as they tried to storm into the Chinese Embassy building to protest the violent crackdown on monks in Lhasa, capital of Tibet.

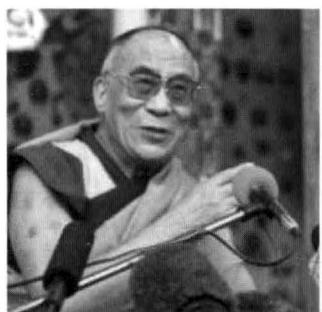
As per a PTI news, these protestors who tried to march towards the Embassy were stopped by police personnel near the building at around 11 a.m on Saturday. A couple of days further on, Tibet was embroiled in violent protests. Afterwards Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spir-

itual guru, demanded an investigation into those recent incidents in Tibet leading to the death of many Tibetan protestors and asserted that China was committing a "cultural genocide".

Later on while addressing the media at Dharamsala, the exiled Tibetan leader said the Olympics scheduled later in Beijing should not be called off and he had "no power over the protestors in Tibet". There are many restrictions on education in monasteries in Tibet and the Chinese were using force to achieve peace.

As per another media report, Dalai Lama also said it was "the moral

responsibility of the world to remind China of the continuing human rights violation in Tibet". The Dalai Lama also lamented that, "every one except China", knew "we are seeking only autonomy and not independence". He also commented that India was being "over-cautious" at times in responding to the Tibetan issue.



India-Africa Conclave held in March; April to witness a Summit

India-Africa partnership Summit is going to be held in the month of April, just prior to the Summit, Indian business men have demanded for quicker business visas from these African countries. Leaders of 14 countries are going to visit India to participate in India-Africa partnership summit.

Arun Agarwal, chairman, of the ASSOCHAM's committee on International Affairs informed that "We want multi-entry business visas of longer duration, from one to five years for business travellers." This will have a long term effect on enhancing trade and investment relations between the two sides.

In a media report

Mr. Agarwal said that Indian businessmen find it more difficult to get business visas from some African countries. It discourages them to invest in African countries. By saying that some parts of Africa are more secure than anywhere in the world, Arun Agarwal made a strong pitch for Indian businessmen to invest in Asian countries.

The same media report informs that Uganda's High Commissioner to India Nimisha Madhvani agrees with the need for more business travel but added that visa was not an issue with her country. "We give visa on arrival. So get ready to invest in Uganda." Nimisha Madhvani says that Uganda is looking for investment in agro-processing and infrastructure development.

Zimbabwe's Ambassador to India Jonathan Wutawunashe urged both sides to leverage their strengths for a mutually profitable engagement. "India has got things Africa needs. Africa has got things India needs. We need more constructive energy to energise us," he said.

Prior to the India-Africa Summit, going to be held on April 8, India's economic ties with Africa are definitely going to boost up at a three-day conclave starting on March 19 in which ministers and business people from over 20 African countries will participate.

Angolan Envoy calls for unity

Angolan ambassador to Canada, Miguel Zau Puna, has in Ottawa, appealed to Angolan residents to keep united as a family, regardless of their political affiliations. The diplomat said so during a meeting he held with the new managing board of the Angolans Association in Ottawa, adding that only with the spirit of unity and tolerance within the community will it be possible to achieve the goals set. He called on the new managing board, led by Nelson Tavares, to keep united always prevailing the will and opinion of everyone as a group, at the same time that they should seek to extol the sentiment of angolanity. Nzau Puna rejoiced at the good relationship between the diplomatic mission and all associations existing in Canada, thanks, he said, to the spirit of comprehension. The ambassador said that doors are open to those who intend to return in the country to participate in the process of reconstruction. The meeting was attended by other diplomats too.

Diplomatic Countdown

Embassies in India - 96
High Commissions in India - 29

Consulates in India

Mumbai - 30
Delhi - 16
Chennai - 7
Calcutta - 6
Pondicherry - 1
Hyderabad - 1
Goa - 1

New York Consulate General of India conducts video conferencing

Consulate General of India in New York, held a post budget video-Conference Question and Answer session on February 29, 2008.

A Press Release issued by the Consulate General of India office informs that Indian Finance Minister P Chidambaram addressed 100 CEO's and Senior executives of financial companies, academia and media representatives.

Indian Finance Minister responded to a number of questions related to tax reforms, agricultural

credit, bilateral Free Trade Agreement and other issues. The Press Release informs that the live video conference with Finance Minister was followed by a panel discussion of the Economic Survey and the Budget proposals.

The Video Conference was moderated by Indian Consul General in New York, Neelam Deo. Finer points of the Budget were elaborated by experts who were of the view that the Budget was balanced, forward looking and would sustain high growth.



Indian Consul General to US, Neelam Deo (c) with other officials during the Video Conferencing session

Israel-India Combined workgroup meet on the war on terror

A media release issued by the Israeli Ministry of External Affairs informs that the seventh meeting of the Israel- Indian Combined workgroup on the war on terror and the fourth meeting on disarmament and proliferation was convened in Jerusalem on 10-11 March 2008.

Reports inform that Vivek Katju, Additional Secretary

in the Ministry of External Affairs lead the Indian delegation to the talks. Mrs. Mariam Ziv, MFA Deputy General, Division for Strategic Affairs, lead the Isreali side.

Discussing threats and cooperation

The media report informs that the two sides discussed global and regional

terror threats, they also discussed drug trafficking, computerised terror and cooperation in international forums. Besides this, as per the report, opinions were also exchanged on regional and international efforts in the battle against terror.

As per the report, the two sides emphasized their commitment to the

prevention of proliferation of weapon of mass destruction.

Issues related to international organizations, including UN Disarmament Commission and the UN General Assembly were also discussed. As per the report, a decision was taken to hold the next round of discussions in New Delhi, India.

India opens a Consulate office in Guangzhou

India-China political relations keep fluctuating. Political leaders from both the sides keep indulging in remarks related to the border dispute. If we ignore the political relations between the two countries, the business relations between the two are soaring high.

A media report informs that India opened a new

Consulate in Guangzhou in the first week of March. Guangzhou is an economically vibrant region of China.

Indian media informs that the opening of this new Consulate in Guangzhou was a relatively solemn affair.

Trade deficit with China has increased

India's trade deficit with China has increased a lot. in the last few years. There has been a more than 11 times growth in the trade deficit in last five years. India exports mainly raw material to China where there is an extremely low margin for the Indian exporters, whereas for China exports finished products to India on which there is

high margin. As it is Indian markets are flooded with cheap Chinese goods.

Reports inform that the decision to open a Consulate in Guangzhou was taken in the year 2007. The Consulate became operational in 2007 and in the year 2008 the Consulate got its own premises. Gautam Bambawale is the Consul General of India in Guangzhou.

In this issue, we present you information on Central Asian diplomatic missions in India, their addresses and representatives heading these Missions. Photographs of the Ambassadors and information about the Embassies and High Commissions is being gathered and would be published in the future issues of Imprint.

C E N T R A L A S I A F A C T F I L E

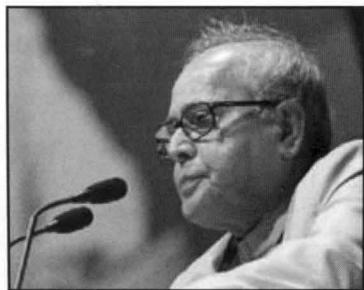
Country	Diplomat	Address	Information
Uzbekistan	Prof. Saydakmal S. Saydaminov	<p>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</p> <p>Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan</p> <p>EP 40, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Marg, Chanakyapuri New Delhi-110021</p> <p>Ph No: +91-11-2467 0774, 2467 0775, 2410 5640</p> <p>Fax: +91-11-2467 0773</p> <p>E-mail: uzembind@vsnl.com</p>	Working Hours: Monday To Friday: 1.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. & 2.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M.
Turkmenistan	Parakat Hommadovich	<p>Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary</p> <p>Embassy of Turkmenistan</p> <p>C-11, West End Colony, New Delhi-110021</p> <p>Ph No: +91-11-2467 6526, 2411 6527</p> <p>Fax: +91-11-2467 6527</p> <p>E-mail: turkmind@starith.net turkmen_embassy@starith.net</p>	Working Hours: Monday To Friday: 9.00 A.M. to 3.00 P.M.
Tajikistan	Salohoddin Nasriddinov	<p>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</p> <p>Embassy of Tajikistan</p> <p>D-12/6, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057</p> <p>Ph No: +91-11-2615 4282</p> <p>Fax: +91-11-2615 4282</p> <p>E-mail: tajembindia@yahoo.com</p>	Working Hours: Monday To Friday: 9.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. & 2.00 P.M. to 5.00 P.M.

FOREIGN POLICY ON THE WEB

This section provides information about websites which give political information. We hope our readers would find this information useful. Do send us your feedback.

1. **www.diplomacy.edu/Roma** - It is a website of the Roma Diplomacy project, run through cooperation between DiploFoundation and Roma organisations.
2. **www.citizen-diplomacy.org** - It is a website on Citizen Diplomacy.
3. **www.genevadiplomacy.com** - It is a website of the Geneva School of Diplomacy.
4. **www.spiritualdiplomacy.org** - It is a website on spiritual diplomacy.
5. **www.aseansec.org** - It is the website of ASEAN Secretariat.

Recent developments in India's Foreign Policy Excerpts from Pranab Mukherjee's statement



ON March 3, 2008, Indian Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee apprised the House on developments related to foreign policy since the conclusion of the Winter Session last December.

PM's China visit

Pranab Mukherjee informed, Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh paid an official visit to the People's Republic of China, our largest neighbour, from 13 to 15 January 2008. He was received with great warmth. PM and Premier Wen Jiabao signed a joint document on "A Shared Vision for the 21st Century between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China," that reflects the congruence of interests that we share on regional and international issues, and our willingness to work together in those areas. Prime Minister also took up the issue of trans-border rivers. The first meeting of the Expert Level Mechanism was held in September 2007. We have proposed to the Chinese side that we expand our cooperation in this area. We have also agreed to intensify high level exchanges with China. I will be visiting China this year and the Chinese Foreign Minister will also visit India. We will be holding the second annual defence dialogue as well as the second joint military exercise this year in an effort to continue deepening mutual understanding and trust between our Armed Forces. Our bilateral trade continues to show strong growth and both governments have revised the trade target to 60 billion dollars by 2010.

Boundary question

Given below are the excerpts from the Suo Motu Statement by Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee in Lok Sabha on Foreign Policy-related Developments. His speech gives an overview of India's current relations with other nations.

Pranab Mukherjee said on the boundary question, during Prime Minister's visit, both sides positively appraised the work of the Special Representatives in seeking a mutually acceptable framework for a settlement that will be based on the Agreement on Guiding Principles and Political Parameters signed in April 2005. Both sides have also agreed to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas.

He also informed that the fact that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India has been clearly conveyed to the Chinese side by the Indian Government.

Pakistan

Regarding Pakistan, Indian Foreign Minister said that India shared the anguish of the people of Pakistan at the tragic assassination of former Prime Minister Mrs. Benazir Bhutto in a despicable terrorist act. We are gratified that, in the recent elections in Pakistan, the people of Pakistan were able to express their wishes clearly and in a democratic manner on their own future. India wishes to see Pakistan develop and prosper in a stable democratic order. Government stands ready to resume the Composite Dialogue process as soon as a duly constituted government is in place in Pakistan. It remains our hope that we would be able to resolve outstanding issues and build a mutually beneficial relationship with Pakistan in an atmosphere free of violence and terrorism.

Afghanistan

The security situation in Afghanistan remains a concern to us, but will not be allowed to affect our

commitment to Afghanistan's reconstruction. We lost two of our personnel in a terrorist strike on a major road building project in Afghanistan in early January this year. Five of our personnel were also wounded in this attack, which also claimed the lives of twelve Afghan security persons. We extend our heartfelt condolences to all their families. The international community must stand firmly with President Karzai and his Government as they face up to the twin challenges of a major threat from terrorism in the form of the Taliban, and seek to build a democratic and pluralistic polity.

Nepal

Nepal is undergoing a critical transition. After two postponements, Constituent Assembly elections are scheduled to be held on April 10, 2008. The elections will offer all Nepalese, including those in the Terai, a chance to have a say in their own future. Government is committed to assist in every possible way Nepal's transition to a democratic, stable, peaceful and prosperous state.

Sri Lanka

India is closely monitoring developments in Sri Lanka and is concerned about the recent upsurge in the violence and conflict in that country. As Hon'ble Members are aware, our policy towards Sri Lanka is based on the conviction that there is no military solution to the conflict. The way forward lies in a peacefully negotiated political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka acceptable to all communities, including the Tamils.

The interests of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka are a matter of particular significance to us in our dealings with Sri Lanka. With this in mind, we have welcomed as a first step the declared intention of the Sri Lankan government to fully implement the 13th Amendment. We are also fully conscious of the need to provide for the safety of our fishermen. We have impressed on the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint and for our fishermen to be treated in a humane manner.

Myanmar

Myanmar is India's close neighbour and a gateway to the ASEAN. We have emphasized to Myanmar that the process of national reconciliation should be broad-based to include all sections of society including Aung San Suu Kyi and the various ethnic groups. India fully supports the UNSG's good offices and his Special Envoy Mr. Ibrahim Gambari's mission to initiate a process of dialogue. At the bilateral level, cooperation in cross border infrastructure development projects, for providing better connectivity to the landlocked Northeastern region of India, is an important area of our relationship with Myanmar. Considering our common ethnic linkages and security considerations, it is essential for India to ensure that there is peace and stability in Myanmar during the period of its political reforms.

SAARC

Pranab Mukherjee said that he chaired the 29th session of the SAARC Council of Ministers that was held in Delhi from 7-8 December 2007. This session reviewed the progress made since the 14th Summit in April 2007 to move SAARC from declaratory to implementation phase. We decided to operationalise immediately the SAARC Development Fund. Other decisions taken related to establishment of the South Asian University, the SAARC Food Bank and for promotion of physical connectivity.

Malaysia

Government remains deeply solicitous for the welfare of people of Indian origin living abroad. There

is a large community of people of Indian origin in Malaysia who are citizens of that country. We have friendly relations with Malaysia and we are in touch with the Malaysian authorities in the matter. During our interactions with them, concerns expressed in India, including in Parliament, regarding developments pertaining to the Indian community in Malaysia have been suitably conveyed.

Gaza and West Bank

The Government has been deeply concerned about the recent events in Gaza and the West Bank. The hardship and misery caused by these developments is deplorable. We have indicated that India is ready to extend all possible assistance to help the people of Palestine to overcome the suffering they are facing.

Russia

There were significant visits from countries outside our immediate neighbourhood, which have helped in strengthening our relationship with these countries. The recent visit of Russian Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov to Delhi (12-13 February 2008) contributed to strengthening the strategic partnership with Russia. During his visit to New Delhi, the Russian PM inaugurated the "Year of Russia in India", which will be followed by the "Year of India" in Russia next year.

UK and France

Prime Minister Gordon Brown of UK visited India (20-21 January 2008) for the 4th India-UK annual summit. President Nicolas Sarkozy of France was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations this year. This was the first visit by President Sarkozy to India and helped in deepening our strategic partnership.

Japan

Our partnership with Japan continues to expand on the basis of the Road Map signed when the Prime Minister of Japan visited India in August last year. In recent conversations that Prime Minister and I have had with our new Japanese counterparts, they have expressed their desire to work towards further

strengthening our bilateral relationship. President Gayoom of Maldives paid a state visit to India from February 6-12, 2008. India has provided economic and technical assistance to develop infrastructure facilities in Maldives in mutually identified areas including the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Male. The Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers of the Sultanate of Oman, Sayyid Fahad Bin Mahmoud Al Said, visited India last December, marking the first visit in a decade. I visited Oman in January 2008. During this period, we also hosted visits from PMs of Denmark, Hungary and Greece.

IAEA and Indo-US Nuclear Cooperation

We are currently engaged in negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency to arrive at an agreed text of an India-specific Safeguards Agreement. The conclusion of such an agreement will enable the Nuclear Suppliers' Group to amend its guidelines for civil nuclear commerce in favour of India. This will open the door to civil nuclear cooperation with various countries, including Russia, USA, France, UK, etc., with many of whom the necessary enabling bilateral agreements for such trade have been discussed and are in various stages of finalization. This development will signify, finally, an end to the unfair technology denial regimes and sanctions that India has been faced with for over three decades. We will continue to seek broad political consensus within the country to take forward our engagement on this issue with other countries.

Summary

To sum up, Pranab Mukherjee said that he would emphasize that the government will continue its efforts to develop close political, social and economic relations with the countries of our region and with all the major powers of the world, so as to add to our ability to pursue our independent foreign policy as dictated by our national interest.

Ronen Sen meets Indian workers

A media report informs that the Indian Ambassador to US Ronen Sen has conveyed his willingness to help the Indian shipyard workers. Around 100 Indian shipyard workers had quit their jobs in the US, protesting abysmal working conditions.

These estranged shipyard workers finally managed to meet the Indian

Ambassador on March 28, 2008. The meeting came after a long march from Mississippi to Washington. A media report informs Ronen Sen said that he would do all he could to protect their rights.

As per the report, the Embassy and the Indian Government would go an extra mile in taking care of the workers' safety se-

curity and dignity, Sen told workers who reached the Indian Embassy carrying placards and shouting slogans after their 1,500-km "journey for justice" that began in New Orleans on March 18. They had quit their jobs on March 6.

Mr. Sen met the workers for over three hours, and listened to their concerns and demands.



Indian Ambassador to US Ronen Sen

Former Ambassadors meet in Islamabad

Ten Indian envoys were in Islamabad in the end of March. These envoys were in Islamabad to discuss bilateral relations with a group of Pakistani Envoys.

This meeting jointly or-

ganized by the Association of Indian Diplomats and the Association of Former Ambassadors of Pakistan.

Apart from its scheduled meeting on March 31, 2008 with the former Ambassadors of Pakistan,

the Indian delegation was also scheduled to hold a meeting with the members

of Pakistani Think Tank including the Institute of Strategic Studies Pakistan.

The new building of Afghan Parliament is to be constructed by India

India and Afghanistan share a close bond, now India is providing its best possible help in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. India is also providing help to Afghanistan for the reconstruction of its Parliament Building.

Cabinet gives approval

The Indian Cabinet, in the month of February approved the move for the combined projects of construction of Afghanistan's Parliament and Indian chancery complex in Kabul.

Media reports inform that on Wednesday

January 30th 2007, the Indian Cabinet granted approval to the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) to go ahead with the construction of the new building of Afghanistan's Parliament in Kabul

CPWD to construct the Indian Chancery

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister, Priyaranjan Dasmunsi told media persons after a cabinet meeting that the CPWD would also construct the Indian Chancery in the Afghan Capital.

The CPWD is already in the process for inviting tenders.

INVITATION TO THE SUMMER SESSIONS OF THE ACADEMY FOR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY, BERLIN

The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD) is pleased to announce that it is now taking applications for the 'Summer Session' of the Academy for Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin, Germany. The Academy will be running week-long courses between June and August 2008, which will explore the concept of cultural diplomacy in an exciting and hands-on manner.

Courses will take full advantage of the Academy's Berlin location, incorporating elements of the rich and vibrant cultural scenes for which the city is famous. Students will have the opportunity



to see Berlin from a perspective not offered to tourists and to speak with a variety of individuals interested in promoting cultural understanding in a city of diverse cultural backgrounds. At the same time, students will learn about German culture and in so doing will gain first hand experience in cultural diplomacy. The Academy's 'Summer Session' is open to students, young leaders, professionals, academics and interested individuals from all over the world. For further information or to download an application form, please see the "Academy" page of our website:

www.culturaldiplomacy.org

Pranab Mukherjee; India have always been a leading member of the international consensus

Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee visited Washington from March 24-29, 2008. During this visit he met the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. He also met the US President George Bush. Pranab was also scheduled to meet the US National Security Advisor, Stephen Hadley. Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon accompanied Mr. Mukherjee in his trip.

Condoleezza Rice later informed that they discussed some elements of the U.S.-India relationship." The duo also talked about the deepening of Indo US economic ties, of our defense cooperation, and the deepening of our dialogue about regional issues." she added. The two sides also discussed Burma.

In a response to a question on the Indo-US Nuclear Deal, Condoleezza said, I believe (Nuclear Deal) would be good for both sides and also good for the future of nonproliferation and so we will continue to work on that agreement. The Indians are now in a process of working with the IAEA and

we'll follow that progress, but we will have further discussions on that matter later.

Pranab Mukherjee stated, "We believe that the India-U.S. partnership is based on a bedrock of long-term commitments and a shared vision." Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee also spoke at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on "Perspectives on India-US Relations.

Indian EAM also said, "One of the unique characteristics of our foreign policy and national security outlook is that they are based on a broad national consensus. While there has always been debate and dissent on the best ways in which to achieve our foreign policy priorities, a national consensus once arrived at, transcends party politics and even changes of government. For example, the multiple opinions on the India-US nuclear initiative in India and outside disguise the fundamental common understanding that energy security for India is vital and that nuclear energy through national means as well as international



Indian External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee with the US Secretary of State for External Affairs, Condoleezza Rice.

collaboration is a vital part of it."

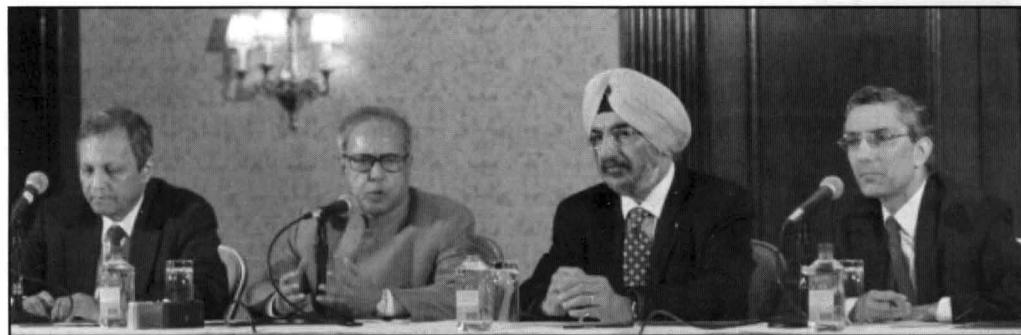
He also said, it is no longer possible for any nation to succeed without concerted international action. Pranab Mukherjee also said something which is extremely significant. He said, "The international discourse on the foreign policies of countries like India has often been defined by categories that are sometimes misleading or even irrelevant. For example, on matters of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, India is projected as having been outside the mainstream, whereas we have always been a leading member

of the international consensus."

He also said, "We have unilaterally implemented controls on nuclear equipment, material and technology more effectively than perhaps any other state. Being from a neighbourhood that has the biggest sources and destinations of proliferation, we are particularly conscious of its dangers."

"India's growing economic imprint is also connecting us more directly with West Asia and the Gulf on one hand, and the Asia Pacific region on the other. To that extent, we have a direct stake in and are ready to contribute to any effort to promote peace and security in these regions and protect the sea lanes of commerce and energy," said the Indian EAM.

Mr. Mukherjee said that both countries should shed the baggage of the last 30 years to launch a new era of cooperation in civil nuclear power to address India's burgeoning energy requirements.



Indian External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee addressing the media at Willard Hotel, Washington, DC on March 25, 2008. Also seen from left are Ambassador Ronen Sen, DCM Ambassador Raminder Singh Jassal and Embassy Spokesperson Rahul Chhabra.

Cultural Diplomacy

In this article we will analyze Cultural Diplomacy and its principal objectives. We will also try to understand as how this domain of diplomacy is achieved and what is its seriousness. Cultural diplomacy in India will also be discussed here.

What is Cultural Diplomacy?

Cultural Diplomacy is a domain of diplomacy concerned with establishing, developing and sustaining relations with foreign states by way of culture, art and education. It is also a proactive process of external projection in which a nation's institutions, value system and unique cultural personality are promoted at a bilateral and multilateral level.

Cultural Diplomacy as per the Indian perspective is described as the art of diplomacy in promoting culture, or in other ways to project the life of a group of people to others in such a way which would result in creating awareness of one another. Cultural Diplomacy goes beyond stereotyped images and to mould perceptions in a favourable way. Such awareness leads to interaction amongst various players, states and individuals.

Principal objectives of Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural Diplomacy primarily aims to positively influence public and high level opinion in a foreign state. The expected outcome of cultural diplomacy is the formation or continued existence of a preferential and advantageous policy by the foreign state towards the state carrying out the Cultural Diplomacy.

How to accomplish Cultural Diplomacy

It is accomplished through a process of communication which is carried out using a variety of tools. Cultural diplomacy can be achieved by organizing cultural activities or events with which a particular

As a part of the Japan-India friendship year, 2007, Runkayun dance was organized in New Delhi by the Embassy of Japan in India



country is identified with. It would thus result in our using the instrumentality of 'culture' in promoting a country's diplomatic interests in commercial, political and strategic fields. This would create not only a cultural presence but would also ensure how the other person or nation would recognize and understand the projecting nation.

Seriousness of Cultural Diplomacy

Early in the Cold War, American efforts at cultural diplomacy were funded by the CIA as well as the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations. Although CIA sponsorship would be inappropriate and counterproductive today. The history is a useful reminder of how seriously Washington once took the promotion of mutual understanding through cultural exchange. Policy-makers understood the link between engagement with foreign audiences and victory over ideological enemies and considered cultural diplomacy vital to U.S. national security. Just recently, as a part of the Japan year in India, the images of Japanese dancers performing Runkayun dance can definitely be termed as an example of cultural diplomacy.

Cultural Diplomacy in India

In India ICCR holds the main accountability for practicing Cultural Diplomacy. ICCR was envisaged by its founder President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, as an organization that would foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other nations & peoples.

This organization promotes a communion of cultures and a creative dialogue among nations. ICCR carries out its mandate of Cultural diplomacy by exchanges of visits by scholars, academicians, opinion-makers, artists & writers.

It also conducts participation in seminars and symposia abroad, exchange of visits by performing arts groups, Exchanges of exhibitions, commissioning of busts and statues of Indian leaders for installation abroad, presentation abroad of informatics, audio-visual material, books on India & Indian musical instruments is carried out. Active collaboration in the operations of some Foreign Cultural Centers in India is also promoted by this organization. ICCR also sponsors cultural & intellectual exchanges between India and partner countries.

The Government of India has realized the importance of Cultural Diplomacy and in the 2008-2009 budget Rs 750 million has been allocated by the Indian Government to ICCR so that the organization can carry forward its Cultural Diplomacy initiative. Perhaps Indian policy makers very well understand that culture is far more than language, folklore, food, or art. It is the lens through which people see, and make sense of their world. Culture determines what is admired and what is despised, what makes life worth living, and what things are worth dying for. And Culture diplomacy could possibly impede the possibility of future conflicts.

Indian Envoy not to accompany the delegation to Tibet

Media reports published in the end of March inform that many foreign diplomats based in Beijing left for a joint visit to Tibet. Something which stands out is a fact that Indian Envoy refusal to accompany this delegation. Chinese authorities had sent an invitation to the Indian Envoy, Nirupama Rao. Short notice

is being termed as the reason for not taking up this invitation.

Indian Authorities have denied that India would boycott the Beijing Olympics in retaliation to the summoning of the Indian Envoy, Nirupama Rao at 2 am in the night in the end of March.

Indian government gave a reason that there isn't

much of the insider information to be gained by joining a highly controlled trip to Tibet.

This tour of diplomats was organized by the Chinese Foreign Ministry. A media report informs that Chinese Government wants the world to see the violence in Tibet the way Chinese government wants to.

Astt Foreign Minister of China comes to India

The Astt. Foreign Minister of China, He Yafei came to India on February 29, 2008. In India, He Yafei had meetings with Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon and Indian Foreign Minister

Pranab Mukherjee.

Positive comments were rendered on the Indian Prime Minister's visit to China and also discussed how to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two

countries and promote in-depth of China- India strategic relationship. The two sides agreed to maintain the high level political exchanges, expand the mutually-beneficial economic and trade cooperation.

Ambassador speaks



**Hideaki Domichi,
Ambassador of
Japan to India**

"Both of our Governments are cooperating closely to create a more attractive environment for the private sectors to operate. Negotiations on our bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement started last year. The Japanese Government is extending a huge amount of ODA finance to help build infrastructures in India."

India planning to construct road on Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar border

India is planning to construct roads near Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar border border. Media reports which appeared in the month of March inform that India is considering the proposal of constructing roads on India- Nepal and India- Bhutan borders.

Another Press Release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs also informs that India and Myanmar have expressed strong desire that the common border between the two countries should be a region and symbol of peace and harmony so that the benefits out

of various infrastructure projects and economic cooperation between the two countries can be fully realized.

Security and border management

Both sides have agreed to work closely for achieving these objectives and in this context, discussed various institutional mechanisms to strengthen security cooperation.

The Press Release informs that the understanding was reached at the 14th National Level Meeting between India and Myanmar which concluded on March 10, 2008. The

Indian delegation was led by the Union Home Secretary, Madhukar Gupta, and the Myanmar delegation by their Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Brig. General Phone Swe. At this meeting, various issues of mutual concern including those related to security, drug trafficking and border management were discussed.

The leader of the Myanmar delegation called on the Home Minister, Shri Shivraj Patil. Mr. Patil recalled the strong and close bonds between the two countries and emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation



in the areas of security and border management as well as in the context of India's 'Look East' policy. Myanmar is a close and friendly neighbour with whom India shares a border of around 1650 kms. India-Myanmar bilateral relations are reflective of the multi- dimensional and traditional linkages between the two countries.

Never say no in diplomacy; says Slovak Foreign Minister

Slovakia's Foreign minister, Jan Kubis was recently asked whether he concedes that Slovakia will never recognize independent Kosovo. Slovakia's Foreign Minister gave a reply that was expected from a diplomat. He said, "The word 'never' shouldn't be said in diplomacy."

The Slovak Foreign Minister Foreign Minister further said, "I don't want to set any timeframe. I only know that the situation isn't developing in an unequivocal way, and we don't exactly know today

what turn developments in Kosovo will take," This explanation was given by the Slovak Foreign Minister, in connection with President Ivan Gasparovic's statement that Slovakia has sufficient cause not to recognize Kosovo immediately.

The Slovak Foreign Minister also said that the international community is not reacting uniformly. He added that at present only few countries have recognized Kosovo and his country does not know exactly, today, what turn

developments in Kosovo will take. Kubis also said, "We're still not at a stage where we can sit down and analyze where we're at, but nothing radical has happened compared what the situation was like a month ago."

The connotation which can be extracted from the above talks is that Slovakia is wants to understand the situation in the region before coming on to a decision regarding Kosovo.

Image: Slovakia's Foreign minister, Jan Kubis



Slovakia's Foreign Minister, Jan Kubis

Comoran's first envoy to Iran, present credentials

First Envoy of Comoran to Iran, Ahmad Mujib al-Mazouqi presented a copy of his credentials to the Foreign Minister of Iran Manouchehr Mottaki on

March 1, 2008. Media reports inform that on this occasion, the two sides discussed bilateral ties as well as international issues. On the same day, the new

Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran, Ivan Veiranata Etmaja also presented his credentials. Another report informs that the Foreign Minister of Iran has pro-

posed a practical plan for restoring security in Iraq. This new plan has been dubbed as the 'Software program' which will help restore security in Iraq.

Indian keen on transitional facility via Bangladesh

A media report issued on March 19 says that Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty has stated that India is keen that Bangladesh grants transitional facilities to India through the Chittagong sea port.

Indian Envoy, Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty said that the trade ties between India and Bangladesh would strengthen once this facility is provided. Mr. Chakravarty made this statement during his visit to a trade fair in Chittagong.

India had reportedly requested Bangladesh to



Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty

allow it to transport heavy equipments for power plants from Kolkata to Tripura via Bangladesh. Bangladesh had expressed reservations regarding this proposal of India. India is still awaiting a reply for this proposal.

Navtej Singh, the next Indian Ambassador to Israel

A news report by ANI informs that Navtej Singh Sarna will be the next Ambassador of India to Israel. Sarna who is at the Joint Secretary level is also the spokesperson of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

Mr. Sarna will succeed Arun Singh who is being posted as India's Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington. Reports inform that before being appointed as the spokesperson, he had served as the Press Minister in the Indian Embassy in Washington.

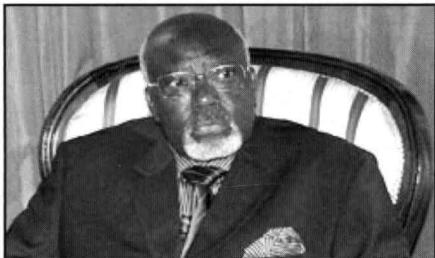
Mr. Sarna is a 1980 Batch IFS officer.



Navtej Singh Sarna

Mr. Navtej Sarna has emmence experience in the Ministry of External Affairs. He is also an excellent writer too.

Attracting international investors is the main task: says Angolan diplomat



Pedro Fernando Mavunza

Media reports inform that Angola's former Ambassador to São Tomé and Príncipe, Pedro Fernando Mavunza has stated that attracting international investors is the main task in the current stage of the national reconstruction process. This statement was made by Pedro Fernando Mavunza in his interview to a São Tomé Weekly. He said, "Involvement of international partners will help develop the industrial and food production network, with a view to the

satisfaction of the country's socio-economic needs."

Mavunza also said that Angola never ceased its solidarity towards brother countries, both in the bilateral and multilateral spheres, always encouraging the regional organisations like the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS) into adopting policies that stimulate south/south cooperation, aiming at the development of the continent.

Pedro Mavunza also added, Angolan government considers it fundamental for the preservation of international peace and security that the developing countries are given a

more active role in the current process of globalisation, through an open, frank and constructive dialogue.

The diplomat also defended the validity of a "Marshall Plan" that would lead to the generalised pardoning of the bilateral and multilateral debts of the poor nations and the rehabilitation of their economies aimed at boosting the development of Africa. On the other hand, the Ambassador said consular services' efforts are underway to register the Angolan community based in São Tomé and Príncipe and promote a closer approximation among Angolans resident there and those living in the country. Pedro Fernando Mavunza is the new Ambassador of Angola to Congo Brazzaville.

Japan calls the Australian and Dutch Ambassadors

On March 4, Japan called in the Australian and Dutch Ambassadors in Tokyo and urged them to restrain anti-whaling protestors. This move came after protestors pelted a Japanese whaling ship in Antarctic waters with foul-smelling acid and slippery powder.

As per the media reports, the Australian government condemned the actions of protest group Sea Shepherd, which says it threw beer bottles containing butyric acid, found in rotten butter, at the whaling ship Nisshin Maru.

Japan described the US-based Sea Shepherd as "terrorists" and has lodged protests with Australia,

where the Sea Shepherd's Steve Irwin vessel last called into port, and The Netherlands, where the boat is registered.

Reports inform that Japan summoned Australian Ambassador Murray McLean and Dutch Ambassador Alphons Hamer and urged them to prevent more clashes.

Japan also complained that several crew members were hurt in this, but Sea Shepherd denied anyone had been injured.

"That was an inexcusable act to inflict unjustifiable damage to Japan's ship and to harm the safety of the crew who are operating legally in the public sea," said Japan's top govern-



ment spokesman Nobutaka Machimura.

Japanese authorities said they were still investigating a substance in envelopes thrown by Sea Shepherd protesters, said to make the Japanese ship's deck so slippery that the crew could not work.

Bollywood diplomacy!

Angelina Jolie, Bono, George Clooney...and closer home Arundhati Roy, Shabana Azmi, Amitabh Bachchan - celebrities all and activists too. Citing these examples, a visiting Canadian expert on international affairs, Andrew Cooper says the Indian government should train Bollywood actors in the art of diplomacy as they have access to international circles of wealth and power and wield a lot of influence. Andrew Cooper, an associate director at the Ontario-based think tank, Centre for International Governance Innovation, was recently in India to promote his book.

Belarus US Envoy expelled

Media reports inform that Belarus has expelled the Ambassador of United States. President of Belarus Lukashenko has expelled the Ambassador of United States. Reports inform that the decision to expel the Ambassador of United States was taken after a row over the travel restrictions imposed on the President of Belarus by Washington. US had also imposed sanctions on Belarus's state controlled and chemical company, Belneftekhim. Media reports inform that US authorities has described the expulsion as highly disappointing.

