

be known as "The Father of Development," Malaysia's second prime minister. Rather than fielding candidates against each other in the first elections the British permitted under their rule, the two leaders decided to collaborate and field a common slate in Kuala Lumpur under the Alliance banner. Though the British claimed that without racial harmony, they would not grant independence, they opposed the Alliance, and instead backed the former UMNO leader Tun Hussein Onn, who had since been forced out of the party!

Onn advocated opening UMNO to non-Malays (which he later reversed). This was vehemently opposed by the rest of the party on the grounds that in the midst of a full-scale war against a predominantly Chinese communist guerrilla force, they could not safely permit Chinese into the party. The Malays were also clearly committed to reasserting their dominance in their native country after being relegated to a mostly *Kampung* (village)-centered existence, playing virtually no role in the business community, which was dominated by the Chinese. Though a corrupt Malay sultanate had accepted the niche-like existence of the various races, the leaders of the independence movement were challenging the status quo. The creation of the Alliance provided the best possible solution under the circumstances to ally the Chinese and the Malays, and soon after include those of Indian heritage in the MIC.

The Alliance won 11 out of 12 seats, Onn's party taking only 1. The British, needless to say, were caught totally by surprise, and a new era was born. The Alliance was then elevated to a national level and proved equally successful in the next major elections in 1955, when they won 51 out of 52 seats in the Federal Legislative Council.

If member parties of the Barisan coalition take advantage of the historic opportunity offered in this election and fight to rally especially the Malays around the higher purpose of the Barisan, election victory will be probable. The full commitment of all Barisan parties to back Mr. Ong has been announced, and is the first step in the right direction. Remarks made at the first national joint convention of the MCA and UMNO following the victorious 1952 elections can surely provide the appropriate spirit to meet the current challenge. The MCA President Datuk Tan Cheng Lock told the Convention:

"Emancipation from oppressive conditions, whether they be political, social, or economic, can only be won at the price of personal endeavor. National progress must be attained by definitely organized and carefully concerted endeavor. Success needs to be achieved; it cannot be granted or conferred.

"There is no magic formula for the attainment of Malayan freedom and independence. It is a matter of hard work and sweat by each and every one of us who loves and is devoted to Malaya as his homeland or permanent home.

"We must exert our earnest and utmost efforts to achieve the positive task of bringing about and advancing the cause of unity, especially between Malays and Chinese, which is

## Benazir Bhutto visit removes Saudi doubts

by Ramtanu Maitra

Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Zardari's Jan. 10-12 visit to Saudi Arabia was a resounding personal success for the new prime minister. The two-hour meeting she had with King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz in the presence of top aides and leading members of the Saudi royal family was "remarkably warm" and friendly. King Fahd, it was announced, accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan, and as Pakistani Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan pointed out upon return to Islamabad: "There was no indication that the Saudi government and leadership regarded her as anyone else but the chief executive of Pakistan."

The significance of Bhutto's choice of Saudi Arabia for her first trip abroad since assuming office cannot be overstressed. The Saudi kingdom has remained a trusted friend of Pakistan throughout the upheavals the country has faced over the last two decades. Saudi Arabia provides financial support in the form of crude oil at concessional rates, and has also contributed generously to lighten Pakistan's burden in maintaining 3 million Afghan refugees who came to Pakistan after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Continuing Saudi financial support for Pakistan could be crucial for Bhutto, who has pledged to eradicate poverty and make Pakistan "another Japan."

### Washing away misgivings

There had been audible rumblings in the Arab capitals after Bhutto's election victory and accession to power last December. Arab leaders were uneasy about a woman heading an Islamic state, and reportedly there were misgivings within Saudi Arabia about the Bhutto family's ties to Iran. Bhutto's mother, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, who chairs the Pakistan People's Party, is from Iran.

With her trip to Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Bhutto

the prerequisite of freedom and independence.

"The merger of the UMNO and MCA which recently swept the board at the Municipal and Town Council elections, the formation of Sino-Malay Liaison Committees in the various parts of the Federation, and the organization of

acted quickly to quell such fears. She sent Khan Bahadur Khan, Minister for Religious and Minorities Affairs, with a message to the Saudi leaders pledging Pakistan's continuing commitment to Saudi security. Minister Khan met with Crown Prince Abdullah and Prince Naif, interior minister and a full brother of the king. While still in Saudi Arabia, Minister Khan announced that Mrs. Bhutto would be visiting Saudi Arabia in January.

Officially, Bhutto's visit was to perform *Umrah* (pilgrimage to Holy Mecca in the non-*Haj* period) at Makkah Mukkarrama. During the pilgrimage, her entourage, which consisted of 60 people who had suffered at the hands of the previous regime for their fight for democracy, was afforded the rare opportunity of entering the Khana-e-Kaba, the House of Allah. Reports say that when Bhutto, supported by her husband Asif Zardari, emerged from the Holy Kaaba, tears were streaming down her cheeks. It can be assumed that the Harvard and Oxford-educated prime minister had also established her credentials as a faithful follower of Islam.

Relations among Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran were a key point of the agenda, as indicated when Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan, not originally included in the prime minister's entourage, was summoned to Dharan, Saudi Arabia, where they were meeting. According to the Islamabad daily *The Muslim*, Yaqub Khan's presence could have been related to Pakistan's role in bringing about better relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

In the long-drawn-out war between Iran and Iraq, Saudi Arabia has backed Iraq's war effort, while Pakistan has remained neutral, a posture which has sometimes been construed in Riyadh as a pro-Iran tendency in Pakistan. In November 1987, for instance, Iran and Pakistan signed a trade agreement which ensured a \$400 million two-way trade. In addition, Iran agreed to supply 20,000 barrels of crude oil a day to Pakistan (Pakistan rejected the offer to supply its entire requirement). The agreement also provided for the use of Karachi and the neighboring part of Muhammadbin Qassim for the import of Iranian goods. The agreement was made a day before the U.S. declared an economic boycott of Iran, and at a time when Saudi Arabia was attempting to organize a collective Arab mandatory boycott against Iran.

Later, in February 1988, when an international conference in Islamabad sponsored by the London-based Is-

lamic Council and attended by more than 1,000 delegations from the Muslim world, passed a resolution branding Iraq as the aggressor in the Gulf War, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab states sent a communiqué to Islamabad protesting the resolution and Pakistan's involvement in producing it.

There are other outstanding matters. In 1985, Saudi Arabia had asked the late President Zia ul-Haq for a partial withdrawal of Pakistani soldiers from the kingdom. At least 10,000 Pakistani soldiers, approximately 20% Shiite Muslims, were stationed in Saudi Arabia, holding key positions in the technical branches of the armored corps, air force, and navy.

A problem arose when reports came that some Pakistani soldiers had refused to engage in police action in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia against the local population, a large number of whom were Shiites. It was also reported that a number of Pakistani soldiers had deserted Saudi Arabia and sought political asylum in the neighboring Yemen Arab Republic following a minor border incident between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Although reports of a mass exodus of Pakistani forces from Saudi Arabia were exaggerated, many high-level visits by Pakistani leaders, including then Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo in December 1987, were undertaken to sort out the delicate matter.

Another issue on the agenda for Bhutto and King Fahd was the fast-breaking situation in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia has consistently backed Pakistan's policy toward the Afghan mujahideen. It was at King Fahd's behest that the recent meeting between the Peshawar-based IUAM and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov took place at Taif. King Fahd also met privately with Vorontsov.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia both agree that the Soviet troops must withdraw by Feb. 15, as stipulated in the Geneva Accord, and the Afghans must be left alone to decide what form of government they want. There are, however, differences, due largely to the circumstances and constraints in which Pakistan has to function. For example, while the Saudis appear to be open to the Soviet insistence that the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) must be included in the broad-based coalition government in Kabul following the Soviet troops' withdrawal, this concept is flatly rejected by the Peshawar-based mujahideen.

today's National Convention under the joint auspices and leadership of UMNO and MCA to work for the attainment of Malayan independence furnish concrete proof of the signal success of the Alliance, which is essentially non-communal in spirit, aim and nature."

And from a convention address by Datuk Abdul Razak:  
"Let the unity so far established be the foundation on which to mold a bigger and more lasting unity which will grow into a national solidarity on which the future of this country will be molded and consolidated."