LATE S. M. ALI

**DHAKA THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2003** 

### Litmus test for law and order

Ruling party needs exorcising criminal elements

RANTED, there has been a cheapening of human lives lost to accidents and murders with a routine regularity. To that extent, admittedly also, our shock threshold has gone remoter. Even so, we find it extremely difficult to countenance the blatancy and dastardliness with which top businessman Sabbir Alam Khondokar was murdered in Narayanganj on Tuesday. After a morning jogging jaunt and, still in the company of a friend, he was felled by a volley of bullets on an open street 200 yards from his residence. Surprisingly, the police had no inkling of what was to befall him -- a person carrying some risk on his life as he was -- so as to head it off in good time.

The man was outspoken. At a business community meeting closely on the heels of the since-discontinued Army-led joint operation against criminals, some local commanders reportedly wanted to know the names of extortionists and hooligans of the area. Sabbir, as the vice-president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) purportedly opened his remarks by saying that he might be killed for what he was going to say and still he would not flinch from doing it. His premonition has worked; but ironically the police did not feel alerted to the need for giving him protection. On another level, one could discern a certain threat perception about the security of his life and limbs; he was exposed to a likely fall-out of feuding within the local BNP leadership. Reports have it that Sabbir's brother Taimur and Textiles Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury belong to opposing groups in the local BNP. On yet another plane, his brutal murder could have been the handiwork of criminals linked to garments industry

Whatever may be the surmises, one thing is abundantly clear: it was a cold-blooded, premeditated murder by people who wanted him eliminated from the scene. That could point the finger to any number of familiar faces on the local circuit.

So long as the criminals within the ruling party are not exorcised, the law and order situation will not improve. The Prime Minister's directives to her party people that they refrain from excesses have not had the desired percolatory effect. The joint operations have been carried out; there is talk of limited army deployment in the face of the criminals bouncing back minus the power to interrogate suspected criminals. Nothing would work unless the ruling party leads the way and does some weeding out of criminal elements from within.

### Tragic death in subway arson

We extend sympathies, condolences to bereaved families

HE tragic death of more than hundred people in a subway of the South Korean city Daegu tells us how easily anyone out of his mind and desperate can put everyone's life at grave risk. The vulnerability is horrifying. The trauma doesn't end here; officials are predicting the death toll to rise even further since so many more are still listed as missing. The frightening pictures of thick black smoke pouring out of the subway entrance and worried faces of relatives near the scene left us both shell shocked and sad at the same time.

It is unimaginable what kind of pain and agony the people trapped inside the train had gone through. A teenager reportedly called her father from her mobile desperately asking for help before the line was cut off. There must have been others who also tried frantically to get help but most unfortunately failed. Our sympathies are with the families, friends of the bereaved, our good wishes are with those who were rescued from the ill-fated train and receiving treatment at the hospitals.

That it is difficult to take adequate precaution against all manner of commutation accidents is brought home by the South Korean tragic disaster. It is not possible to check on mental fitness of all intending passengers before they buy ticket or board a train. But some kind of screening has become necessary.

We hope after this tragic incident, not only the authorities of South Korea but also those of other countries where underground trains are essential modes of transport would take the matter of passenger safety more seriously. We would urge them to sit down and devise an effective and quick mechanism for checking items being carried by the passengers before entering the stations. Otherwise more lives would be lost through the caprice of mentally deranged persons.

# No evidence of WMD in Iraq



MUSLEHUDDIN AHMAD

LICH awaited reports of Hans Blix and Mohammad Al Baradei, Chief Inspectors of UNMOVIC were presented on Friday, February 14 at the UNSC, New York. Hans Blix's report was a "mixed-bag" though US and UK had very little in terms of "materials" to justify their ongoing war preparations and also for pressuring UNSC to support war against Iraq. After having worked for nearly three months in Iraq and having visited and inspected intensively hundreds of suspected sites, both Blix and Baradei said, 'there was no evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq'. Hans Blix ndeed, challenged the US satellite images on two sites which, according to him, showed movement of conventional weapons and other materials, which were not related to any prohibited items. It is necessary to mention here that UK's first dossier based on satellite images and the latest intelligence report containing copy of a student's research report that included even a coma at a wrong place of a sentence evoked strong international criticism and seem to be irrelevant for the purpose of inspection by UNMOVIC.

Hans Blix said his inspection eam 'found nothing disturbing in Iraq'. He specifically mentioned of increased Iraqi cooperation in the inspection process which led to finding materials like aluminum tubes, empty chemical cells, short range missiles, etc. He however added that Iraq could not provide full account of the amount of Anthrax and VX agents but hoped in the ongoing inspection they would be able to detect the missing materials or at least get reasonable explanations. In the areas of short range missiles, Hans Blix said that some of the missiles exceeded the limit of 150 KMs set by the UN. He, however, did not ring any alarm bell on this as apparently the violation was negligible and it would be possible for the inspectors to either destroy or bring the missile range to the acceptable limit. Iraq's Deputy

Prime Minister Tariq Aziz however said that some missiles could travel some 20-30 KMs more than the set limit as these are not electronically auided ones.

Hans Blix appeared happy to bring to the notices of the Council members that Iraq agreed on two very outstanding major issues -- (i) interviewing of the scientists privately and (ii) acceptance of U2 and German drones' surveillance from air. On the private interview of the scientists he mentioned he was so far able to interview five scientists privately though some more are to be interviewed and Iraq agreed to provide support. On the area of

also said that use of force was not justified at all at this stage and also warned that any use of force is fraught with tremendous risk which would not only destabilise the entire region but also increase tension around the world. He also said that his country found nothing to establish Baghdad's link with Al-Qaida. Finally, he reiterated that France was totally in favour of providing more time to the inspectors to do their job of disarmament and that was the intention of Resolution 1441. As soon as French representative completed his intervention there was applause from the audialready had some weeks of Anthrax-terrorism and particularly in Washington, Indeed, Capitol Hill had to be evacuated and closed for days. If US itself has no control over its own Anthrax stock and already some are in the hands of the terrorists within its own borders, how would a small quantity of Anthrax bother the world if it at all remains unaccounted for in Iraq. Mr. Powell has also be aware that America itself has been sitting over mountains of weapons of mass destruction and it has already used some of them in Japan and Vietnam. Therefore, it should not be too concerned if some bits of Anthrax and VX

dictators and trying to impose their will on their own people as well as on the world. Latest polls show that in America itself 59 per cent of the people want to give more time to the nspectors to do their job and 56 per cent say that America must have all allies on board before any war against Irag. In the UK, about 80 per cent of the people and majority of the Labour members are against war against Iraq. Even in Italy, over 80 per cent of people oppose war. But unfortunately their "democratic" leaders are hell-bent on to start the war against Irag. The egoistic attitude of both

President Bush and Prime Minister

Blair has already created serious rift

among NATO members on the issue

of planning to put defensive military

NATO. Belgium, France and Ger-

many all were opposed to such

deployments in Turkey. After long

two weeks of debate, NATO mem-

bers have glossed over their differ-

ences as France decided to keep

itself out of the NATO Planning

Committee. They, therefore, found a

"grudging compromise". Let's hope

that some war hungry NATO mem-

bers would not start looking for this

sort of "compromise" to clear the

way for NATO's participation in US's

uipment in Turkey -- a member of

UN approval would be an "aggres-The world is, of course, against any war and particularly any war against Irag, Iragi regime, however, must not misread the world reaction as something in its favour. The world peace demonstrations are certainly not a support for Iragi regime; this is indeed in support of innocent Iraqi people -- men, women and children. Therefore, Iraqi regime must show full respect to the world opinion, cooperate fully and allow the inspectors an unfettered and unconditional access to everything that Iraq still might have and finally come

> proved wrong, at least once, in his assertion that 'President Bush cannot think properly' President Bush can certainly see that the whole world is against his possible attack against Iraq. His decision to drop the war plan against Iraq would be the wisest one of Bin Laden must respect the

out clean. Such an overture from the

President Bush to reconsider his

unjust war plan and take back the

forces from the region. Let former

President Nelson Mandela be

side of Iraqi regime might lead

and hopefully bring the world once again to the pre-9/11 situation. The terrorist organisations including that support that the people of the world including those of the USA, UK, Australia, Italy, Spain, etc. have given to the Iraqi people. Therefore these organisations must stop attacking the people and the targets in those countries as the people are not at fault, their leaders may be. Let the people of those countries take care of the political future of their leaders At the head of an Australian

demonstration one peace activist was forcefully stating, "This is Bush's war, Blair's war, Howard's war and not Australians' war". The demonstration in New York. Washington and other places in the USA carried anti-Bush, anti-war placards. Some placards read -- "No war in my name". "No blood for oil". etc. These must be respected by all and everyone.

Had I been a terrorist, I would nave never attacked any people of these countries when I could see that an octogenarian white man. must be a Christian, was walking through a London street in the icy weather, distributing anti-war pamphlets and uttering non-stop -- "No war. No war".

Muslehuddin Ahmad is a former Secretary and South University

# SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

President Bush can certainly see that the whole world is against his possible attack against Iraq. His decision to drop the war plan against Iraq would be the wisest one and hopefully bring the world once again to the pre-9/11 situation. The terrorist organisations including that of Bin Laden must respect the support that the people of the world including those of the USA, UK, Australia, Italy, Spain, etc. have given to the Iraqi people.

aerial surveillance, Iraq agreed to allow U2 and German drones to fly over Iraq to perform the surveillance of the suspected area. Hans Blix was, however, of the view that inspection for a period of about two and half months was not enough to do the job. He clearly asked the UNSC to give more time to the inspectors to do their job as per UNSC resolution 1441. As the resolution is intended for disarmament, obviously more time will have to be allowed to the inspectors to complete their work. He, however could not give any time frame but it was apparent from his earlier comments that the inspectors would need at least a year or so to complete the inspection work, IAEA Director General Mohammad Baradei also confirmed that his inspectors did not find any evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. He also, however, said that his inspectors would need more time as they are already working on some issues which are to be looked into very carefully in order to complete the task given by the UN Resolution 1441.

After the presentation of the reports by the two Chief Inspectors, the UNSC members took their turn to speak on the matter. The countries like France, Russia, China spoke in favour of giving more time to the inspectors to complete their job. French Foreign Minister specifically mentioned that all options have not yet been exhausted. French representative was insisting on ence in the UNSC Hall. The Chairman of UNSC German Foreign Minister Fischer, however reminded the audience that clapping is not permitted within the UNSC meeting area China and Russia also snoke in favour of giving more time to the inspectors and warned that any use of force at this stage would destabilise the entire region.

Secretary of State Colin Powell looked very exasperated and angry over the statements of Foreign Ministers of France, Russia, China. He reiterated US's position that Irag's declaration was neither complete nor accurate which meant that Iraq did not comply with the UN Resolution 1441 fully and it was in "material breach". He however, agreed that there was cooperation in the process but Iraq continued to hide weapons of mass destruction and their agents. He specifically mentioned about Anthrax and VX agents which were not fully accounted for. He however, agreed to provide more intelligence report to the UNSC members later. He, warned the members that unlimited time cannot be allowed to Iraq as this might lead to serious problems like hidden weapons of mass destruction may fall into the hands of terrorists, which may bring disaster to their cities and towns. It seemed that USA could be prepared

to wait for weeks but not for months. Colin Powell talked about possible falling of Anthrax in the hands of terrorists but he knows that America remain in the hands of other coun-Bush Administration has also to

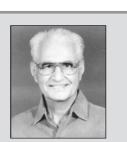
consider that it is not the only wise regime in the world and rest are all unwise and careless in terms of dealing with Irag's alleged weapons. of mass destruction. How would the US destroy weapons of mass destruction in Iraq by bombing the cities and towns where innocent people men women and children live? UN Secretary General Kofi Annan already said that weapons inspectors destroyed more of these suspected weapons in Iraq than what Gulf-war did in 1991? Thus the whole exercise of waging a war to destroy the weapons of mass destruction appears not only futile but also politically motivated and the world cannot support such an one sided approach

Indeed, the whole world has risen against US's war against Iraq. During the last week, huge demonstrations by millions of people took place in over 600 cities and towns around the world. London Hyde Park saw the largest demonstration ever in the U.K. Some estimates put it even at two million strong. Similar large demonstrations took place in France, Italy, Spain, Australia and in many other countries and also within the US itself. Are all these people unwise? One would like to say that both President Bush and Prime Minister Blair and their collaborator John Howard of Australia have been acting like "democratic"

war against Iraq. Arab League has at long last come up with a move that could lead to Arab League opposing any war against Irag but Kuwait has already showed its opposition to such a move. The initiative of President Mobarak to have the Arab Summit on February 28 has yet to be agreed to. Public demonstration however have taken in some of the cities and towns and the press reactions including that of Al-Watan of Saudi Arabia have been critical of the role of the Arab organisations. It is true that Bush administration has taken advantage of the rift among the Arabs. Several Arab countries are hosting the US forces which are poised for attack against Irag. Of

course, Saudi Arabia has already Ambassador and founder president of North expressed its opposition to allowing

# Challenges and responses



MERICAN stance on Kashmir has manv supporters while Pakistan is isolated. Despite Islamabad's spirited denials, the fact remains that two American Ambassadors to India and Pakistan have said identical things about Kashmir. This is a serious challenge for Pakistan's policy-makers because the US position merely upholds India's stand that infiltration from Pakistan continues

There is also the fact that American policy on Iraq makes a war almost sure. Popular Pakistani sentiment is opposed to it; indeed the MMA's supporters are solidly for Saddam Hussain. It is a unipolar world and the US is sure to get away with its designs on both Iraq as well as Central Asia. That becomes a second big challenge. More so as optimistic prognostications about Pakistan economy are also predicated on continued American goodwill. How can anyone then combine the continued need for American help in the economic and financial spheres with Pakistan's Kashmir policy and the widespread latent desire for taking an independent line in international affairs?

The government gives the mpression of being flabby and laid back with little dynamism in it. It is a product of Pakistan Army's political engineering. It happens to be the third major enterprise of the Army's

think tanks, the first and second being Gen. Ayub Khan's BD system and Gen. Ziaul Haq's Islamisation of Pakistan's economy and politics leading to a democracy that was subject to President's veto; the latter could at any time dismiss the whole elected system. Indeed five governments were dismissed six times between 1988 to 1999.

Earlier the BD system had collapsed by March 1969. Another Army-produced system was aborted because meantime Gen. Yahya Khan had become discredIMF and World Bank. The economy demanded a lot of sacrifices by the people which the General cheerfully ensured they made. But he remained in a sort of political quarantine, epitomised by President Bill Clinton not shaking Mr. Musharraf by the hand in front of any camera during his visit to Pakistan or latter's to America. During his visit Clinton insulted the Head of the State of Pakistan in many ways

But 9/11 enabled the General to become George Bush's close friend and ally overnight. That made his

agreement with the US over the Kashmir Jihad. It is difficult to see how would the establishment, the real government of the land, cope with the evolving situation vis-à -vis relations with India, with Jamali and being no more than a puppet. The nominal governing lot is not famous for its imagination or political versatility.

What is heart-breaking is that there is no alternative government waiting in the wings. Net contribution of the establishment is the causing of heavy wear and tear to all Continued opposition to Army will only prolong their sojourn in the

its soil to be used for attacking Iraq.

Saudi Foreign Minister clearly

stated that any US attack without

The second and major answer is to ask the counter question: Have the critics realised what has its undisputed vote puller. Benazir Bhutto, done to PPP? It started as a left-of-centre party and burning the US flag on the slightest pretext, or none at all, came naturally to its cadres. It had, once upon a time in 1970, forced the docile voters in West Pakistan to vote across their bratheri or tribe line or even against collection of another ML's turncoats though later Nawaz Sharif appears to have grown in the job. He did later emerge as an authentic Leader of Punjab. The party had acquired favour with the lower middle classes of Punjab. But that happened as recently as middle 1990s and has now been put under severe strain. Let no one forget that PML(N) was never more than an establishment party that was only beginning to acquire a popular base. Even so, it has surprised people by not entirely being deserted, as rats run out when the ship starts sinking. Other parties are characterised

by being regional in character espousing regional nationalism. But each leader of such a 'leftist' party -the label the establishment loves to paste on them -- was so brutally and ruthlessly oppressed by design to break them after a decade of detention with discreet bribes of making their near relatives rich. There used to be a vital Left till about the middle of 1950s, and a vibrant TU movement till the 1960s. But Pakistan's intelligence agencies' experts infiltrated and subverted them. Coupled with the hopelessness of other leaders, the left or even quasileft was annihilated by 1970s. Bhutto completed the process by outlawing the NAP

A few individuals -- Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Imran Khan, Farooq eghari -- have tried their unsullied nand but came a cropper; they never understood the underlying forces' strength or what was required of them. The only parties to flourish are MMA and MÓM. All the rest of King's men have fallen by the wayside or are ensconced in their own rotten boroughs like Pir Saheb of Pagara. MMA has to be understood. But that is another story of Pakistani establishment's amateur ishness and Americans' fitful and arrogant behaviour.

The question is why are PPP and PML(N) deputies so vulnerable to threats of corruption cases or fall for the illusion of a Minister's power? The first small explanation is their hopelessness that their party will ever again form a government; they see the Army entrenched and realise the futility of opposing it.

the Army's Eastern Command. Zia's design of Army's control (through President's extraordinary powers and functions) too broke down in 1997 when Mr. Nawaz Sharif amended away the Article 58(2)(b) of the Constitution. The Musharra design is in part a return to BD system and in part it is a copy of the Zia's architecture: President remains the source and embodiment of ultimate power, while the elected system, heavily doctored as it is, is totally subservient to him. How well would, or indeed can, it succeed in rising to the challenges that face Pakistan?

ited by the en masse surrender of

Why does the government so lovingly brought into being by General Musharraf looks such an odd collection of nondescripts with one or two exceptions? Partly the General never foresaw the time it would take to raise a King's party and then make it win an election. In the earlier stages, he concentrated on the enjoyment of power and obeying the

economic tasks easy and he proceeded to system manufacturing in an ad hoc fashion. Since he remained the prisoner of his own earlier rhetoric for far too long and did not dare taking off his uniform his party has remained the butt of jokes because it had no leader to symbolise it, like Ayub's Presidency made the Convention League an establishment party to be taken seriously. Even today Q League is nothing more than a bunch of turncoats who betrayed Nawaz Sharif or the 10-12 MNAs from Benazir's PPP who remain renegades.

Future looks altogether too uncertain -- to all. Few think that the lot collected by Mr. Zafarullah Jamali, or imposed on him by intelligence agencies working for Mr. Musharraf, is equal to the tasks awaiting it -- not that the General was able to do any better unless the alacrity with which he made a U turn in the Afghan policy is to be called a great achievement. All else flowed from it, including the serious dis-

PML(N) got the most votes nationally in the last October's elections -certainly far more than pro-Musharraf parties. But the government was formed by Q League with one contrived vote's majority, the ranks of which continue to rise as defectors from PPP and PML(N) keep arriving with the help of NAB and inducements offered by secret agents, such as ministerships and hopes of lucre through contracts in public sector investments in their areas. The amount of political corruption that has gone into the formation of Q League and Jamali government has broken all such squalid records

the parties. Even so, the PPP and

The question is why are PPP and PMI (N) deputies so vulnerable to threats of corruption cases or fall for the illusion of a Minister's power? The first small explanation is their hopelessness that their party will ever again form a government; they see the Army entrenched and realise the futility of opposing it.

Chaudhries, Waderas, Khans or Sardars. The human material that Z.A. Bhutto attracted was the finest any left-of-centre party could hope for. But he became frightened of it and he committed what was infanticide as far back as 1973 and 1974. He threw out leftist leaders and showed to the party's ideologue and Secretary General J.A. Rahim what the local Gestapo can do. Or ask Mairaj Mohammad Khan.

the advice of their big landowning

Bhutto wanted nothing more than what any Muslim League has been. So he imposed the spineless rich landowning gentry on the party as legislators. Benazir has learnt only one lesson in her life: road to Islamabad lies through Washington Her statements or articles look like the work of a hopeless toady of America. She converted the party into America-loving rightwing bunch of yesmen. All decent folks have left the party or are sulking

PML(N) was itself originally a

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

MB Naqvi is a leading columist in Pakistan.

## TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

### Criticism counts!

Bangladesh's bowling performance against West Indies in the World Cup indicates that criticism both home and abroad has worked somewhat like a tonic for the team But sadly, can't say the same for their fishing, sorry batting. They could've been at least 5/32 instead of 2/32 when the game became a washout. I feel that rain and poor fielding of the West Indians saved Bangladesh from another humiliating defeat. But how long will these miracles last? The World Cup isn't the end of the road. When will the boys get their acts together?

Dhaka

### Bangladesh cricket

After reading all the news about our disastrous start in the World Cup I am, like million other Bangladeshis, loosing interest in the game.

in to the pressure is simply unbelievable and the players must be hold accountable for it. They have humiliated the nation.

The way our players have caved

Here we are, a poor nation struggling to feed our citizens properly. Our country spends millions of dollars every year to nurture the talents (if any) of these players. In return we receive nothing short of shame and humiliation

I am scared that Bangladesh will be the first country in the history of

Test cricket whose status will be revoked! Naushad Amin Dallas, Texas, USA

ICC trophy has never been our dream to win but the performance of Bangladesh Cricket Team showed in the first match of the world cup against Canada has given us irreparable pain which will remain in our

mind and heart till we die. Why are we so vulnerable against a country where hardly any one knows what is cricket? We lost to a group of amateurs who probably never dreamt of defeating a Test

playing country! Thanks Bangladesh team for

giving us such an Eid present! Badal Hasib Mohammedpur, Dhaka

Some radical change must be made in the team after the crushing defeat with Canada and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh lost to the Canadian team composed of plumbers, teachers, students, salesman and graphic artists who have not played together for five months before the World Cup and were considered rank outsiders! Our players let the country and million others down by their utter irresponsible display of sports-

At the moment they need: 1. A psychologist to cope with the mindset to deliver the game at the highest levels like the World Cup. Measuring the individual reflex actions and the foot-works in

response 3. A flexible and fit body. 4. A stress-free mind Mohammad Salahuddin London, UK

### "Ethics"

I am an avid reader of this page in The Daily Star but for the first time I saw a very unusual 'letter' "Ethics' by Robert W. Carlson (17.2.03). To be truthful I couldn't make any head or tail of this letter. Is it really a letter or a lecture on "atman" or ethics?

I thought one writes a letter in this sort of pages on current topics.

particular on what they are printing on this page of "Letter to the Editor?" Dr. Rashid Hyder Baridhara, Dhaka

### **US** history of twisted

Should The Daily Star be more

This historical reference might be of interest to readers of The Daily Star. After the Pearl Harbour attack by Japan which brought the US into the World War II there were intensive discussions in early 1942 over whether or not to intern American citizens of Japanese descent. While many experts felt that there was no threat whatsoever, either of sabotage or espionage, posed by these

citizens there were others, mainly politicians, who were hell bent on pursuing such a course of action. One of the reports which supported internment was prepared by General DeWitt, the West Coast Army chief, and concluded as follows:

The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken." (page 168 "Roosevelt's Secret War" by Joseph E. Persico. Random House 2002. Emphasis added).

I suppose this just goes to show that a penchant for twisted logic, which enables black to be brazenly described as white, is nothing new in American public life. By this reasoning the very fact that no

destruction is being found in Irag is actually proof positive that they

evidence of weapons of mass

For the record over 100,000 US citizens of Japanese descent were removed from their houses and imprisoned for 4 years or more in what were described by Franklin Delano Roosevelt himself as "concentration camps". Similarly we can expect that the attack on Iraq will continue to be justified on whatever pretext the mind of man can devise with no need to establish even any fleeting relation to

Rafiqullah Bhuyian Maghbazar, Dhaka