

Official Secrecy Act

Old law must go to make way for a new one

WE fully support the call to repeal Official Secrecy Act in the interest of free flow of information in society.

Can the government deny that officials take refuge under this act to guard their corruption and wrong doings?

We understand that disclosing information on issues of defence and national security is not a prudent idea;

Looting of rifles
A clear pointer to the clout of outlaws

THE incident in which outlaws managed to loot 29 rifles from a jute mill at Daulatpur is a fresh reminder of the ominous and strong presence of extremist groups in the southern districts.

The way the rifles were looted, and the criminals managed to leave the place, does suggest that they neatly carried out their plan, with the law enforcers being unable to put up any resistance.

Now, the looted arms will surely increase the criminals' firepower. It has also become clear that the combing operations that the police launched-- after some of their colleagues were attacked-- to arrest the criminals has not been very effective.

The presence of the self-styled clandestine parties, which go by their own rules in politics, has for long been a threat to peace-loving citizens.

Looting of lethal weapons, that will not end up in safe hands, will have a further negative impact on the overall law and order situation, which has been unstable in the southern districts for a pretty long time.

The extremists are working from within the country, yet the police have failed to dislodge them. But the rule of law and the presence of killers and plunderers cannot go together.

reasons and Mr. Karim, in his unique exquisite letter, without providing any discreet analysis to justify his suggestion, has very distinctly expressed his thoughts.

I ardently support the views of both Mr. Khan and Mr. Karim. Rubaya Naheed New Jersey, USA

This is in reference to the letters of April 23. It seems that the Government is more than happy to flash the neon sign in Arabic atop the airport building which is not necessary at all.

habituated with such a nature of us. ZIA is an international airport and has got to have signs flashing in International Languages.

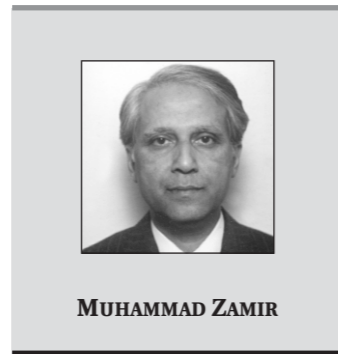
Bengali and English, I can also read Arabic. I don't find anything wrong with the new flashing sign.

We prefer Arabic not because the Arabs speak the language but because we say our daily prayers five times a day in 'Arabic'.

Boycott American and British products

The American and British troops without any UN mandate invaded a sovereign country Iraq and occupied it by force.

Post-war fog clouds prospects in Iraq



MUHAMMAD ZAMIR

THESE have been sorry times for ordinary Iraqis. Death and destruction have been followed by pillage and plunder.

In this context one is reminded of a report published in February this year by experts from the United Nations and the World Health Organization and their assessments about the likely toll of such a war for the 26 million people of Iraq.

Body counts are always hard to predict in any war as they always extend beyond the battle-field.

Fortunately, no chemical weapon or bacteriological weapon was used. It would appear that the Iraqis do not either possess them any more nor were able to ensure their use because of the speed of the advancing coalition forces.

The US is preparing to intensify its efforts to find weapons of mass destruction and is dispatching 1,000 scientists and intelligence analysts to Iraq for this purpose.

tion and warned that future "purported discoveries of banned weapons" by US investigators "will lack credibility".

Investigation in the future might clarify this aspect. Right now, the Iraqis stand not guilty of charges of possessing weapons of mass destruction as claimed by the Coalition.

The evolving situation has acquired special significance after President Bush's recent speech where he proposed that 'the UN should lift economic sanctions' on Iraq.

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problem is that much more acute and the world owes it to the Iraqis to find a solution and that too swiftly.

The United Nations continues to suffer from interpretation as to the denotation and connotation of their medicine and potable water.

possible role. Leaders appear to be splitting hairs as to whether it should be 'vital' or 'central'. The question of saving lives is being endlessly debated, while nothing happens.



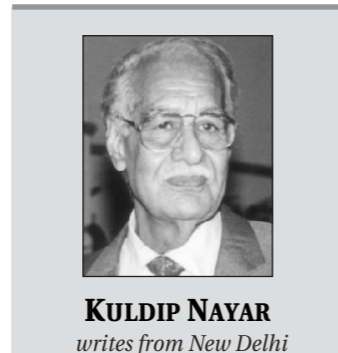
POST BREAKFAST

The opening of another front, and that again a Muslim country, with the open support of Israel, will not win friends in the Muslim world or in the immediate vicinity.

in its hands. Chanting 'Yes to freedom.. Yes to Islam. No to America.... No to Saddam' hundreds of people already come out in the streets of urban Iraq and boldly expressed their views.

Yet, instead of giving full attention to the issue of infrastructure building and resolving problems within Iraq, the Coalition is creating further anxiety in the region by accusing Syria.

The ball is in Musharraf's court



KULDEEP NAYYAR writes from New Delhi

FOR some time one thing which has got crystallised is that all the three points -- New Delhi, Islamabad and Srinagar -- have to be tackled to sort out the Kashmir problem.

When he appointed NN Vohra as an interlocutor on Kashmir Vajpayee touched two points, New Delhi and Srinagar.

Still Vajpayee has openly indicated his intention to span the distance between New Delhi and Srinagar. At the same time, he has underlined India's policy: it does not favour touching the three points simultaneously, something for which the All-Party Hurriyat Conference has been pressing for long.

Vajpayee has followed the same policy in trying to normalise relations with Pakistan. His willingness to have a dialogue with Islamabad also shows that he wants to touch only two points at one time, New Delhi and Islamabad.

This should go home to all those who want to jumble up India, Pakistan and Kashmir together.

Vajpayee's initiative is bold and deserves praise. I wish General Pervez Musharraf's response had been quick and positive because he has been saying repeatedly that he is ready to talk to India any time and at any place.

Muttahida Mahaz (MMM), a combination of six religious parties, has also hailed Vajpayee's move. The latest news is that Pakistan is trying to choose its representative for the talks.

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pointing. Vajpayee is being blamed for putting conditions. All that he has said is that Pakistan should come clean on cross-border terrorism.

Musharraf's solution of Kashmir is still a third country's mediation. After seeing the fate of the UN, where 13 out of 15 Security Council members opposed the invasion on Iraq, he should have been a disillusioned person.

Musharraf should know that no country can escape the long arms of America. He is mistaken if he believes that President Bush is on his side.

In this context, the resignation of Robert Blackwell from American

ambassadorship is significant. It looks as if he was not able to prevail upon the Bush Administration to leave the region alone. Probably, he differed from what the US Administration has planned for India and Pakistan.

What is increasingly becoming clear day by day is that normalising relations between New Delhi and Islamabad is not on the agenda of the Pakistan military.

The Pakistan President should reciprocate Vajpayee's offer. To prove that he really means it, Musharraf should order the ISI and other special agencies to stop "interfering" in Kash-

mir and the northeast. The understanding between India and Pakistan may stop America from carrying out its plans in the region.

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

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.

Arabic neon sign

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Bengali and English, I can also read Arabic. I don't find anything wrong with the new flashing sign. So, is there anything wrong with me and am I being fundamentalist? Please teach me how to be secular.

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The American and British troops without any UN mandate invaded a sovereign country Iraq and occupied it by force.

Iraq destruction

side) in Lebanon. Fortunately, the UN Secretary General has had the courage this time round to point out that 'statements directed at Syria could destabilize the Middle East, a region already heavily affected by the war in Iraq.'

The opening of another front, and that again a Muslim country, with the open support of Israel, will not win friends in the Muslim world or in the immediate vicinity.

It is however heartening to see Coalition forces in Baghdad and Basra start joint patrols with Iraqi police detachments in a bid to restore order in urban areas hit by looting and violence.

Similarly, it would be helpful for the Coalition planners to understand that their battle for the 'hearts and minds' will have to be pursued carefully.

Muhammad Zamir is a former Secretary and Ambassador.

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forces of Bush and Blair. Even in the USA and Britain, people as a whole protested against the aggression on the helpless people of Iraq, the distinguished Parliamentarians of the House of Commons protested and the Ministers resigned, but nothing could stop Bush from invading Iraq!