

Police efficiency

Not just a matter of reward and punishment

THE news that more than 19,000 police personnel were punished last year, for their involvement in corruption and other criminal activities, does indicate that the issue of chastening errant law enforcers has been addressed internally on some scale. At the same time, 14,069 policemen were rewarded for good work last year.

It is obvious that a kind of supervision, monitoring and inspection mechanism has been in operation within the police directorate. And it has made its presence felt by punishing a huge number of police personnel (nearly 10 per cent of the 1.9 lakh-strong police force). The disciplinary actions against the policemen have also shown that the element of transparency and accountability is not missing altogether in the police administration.

So far so good. It must not be forgotten that despite what the police department has done against the corrupt elements, the situation has not changed appreciably at the field level where interaction between the people and law enforcers takes place. While the attempts made to weed out the dishonest must be appreciated, the police still have a long way to go to refurbish their image which has over the years been bruised by allegations of widespread corruption, incompetence and, above all, insensitivity to the needs of citizens.

The police have their own problems. They need better training, better salaries and logistical back-ups including modern equipment and weapons to perform well. Professionals do the best when living in self-esteem and that is even truer about the law enforcers. They have to work in the face of heavy odds in our context. Even their number is very inadequate for a country with a population of more than 130 million and which has witnessed an unusual surge in criminality in recent times.

The political use of the police force over time has destroyed whatever professional integrity they were capable of. When politicised, or made to serve political purposes, police are bound to lose motivation and the sense of commitment to their profession. So, alongside the logistical back-ups, the police do need to be freed from the stranglehold of political interference.

Roadmap blurred by a blow

Israel needs restraining

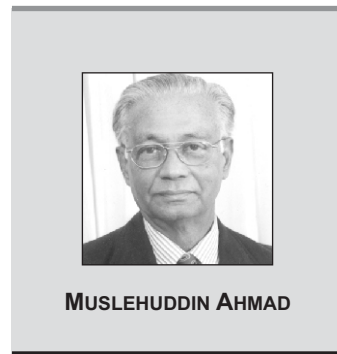
THE attempted assassination of a Hamas leader by an Israeli helicopter-mounted missile attack may have been a setback to the Middle East peace process. President Bush himself appeared chagrined at it, reportedly expressing concern that the violent act could make it more difficult for the new Palestinian leadership to fight off terrorist attacks.

No wonder the concern that the assault could easily weaken Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas's campaign to convince militants to call off suicide bombings and ambush shootings, is sinking. The impasse between the two sides could only make the existing gap yawn. Already, the Palestinian leader's attempt to draw Hamas into ceasefire talks have drawn a blank. The black smokes of fire could render the prospect murkier.

As usual, the Israelis are taking the law into their own hands, even if this meant sending contradictory signals across. On the one hand, they begin to dismantle the West Bank settlement outposts as part of an important requirement of the US-authored roadmap; on the other, they attempt to kill a top Hamas leader throwing the initiative into a quandary. They seem to have a lot of explaining to do. Have they done it deliberately to fuel violence that could cast a shadow on the implementation process? In other words, are they up to wrecking the peace talks? Initially, Israel seemed more keen on the roadmap than the Palestinians, but their latest action makes all concerned wonder what they might be up to.

None should forget that there are many blockades on the way to peace that need to be patiently lifted. The onus principally lies on Israel, the most powerful and pampered side to the bargain, to show restraint for the success of the peace process.

Sharon and road map to peace!



MUSLEHUDDIN AHMAD

A teacher asked one of his students: does a lion[ess], the king of the jungle of animals, lay eggs or give birth to a baby-lion? The student being unprepared as such questions were not in the notebooks used his sixth sense and replied: Sir, lion is a lion; it goes by its whim, produces eggs when it likes and baby-lion when it wishes to do so.

One can detect such a whim in George Bush -- king of the jungle of men, popularly and commonly known as "civilized" animals. He destroys a state when he likes and makes a "Road Map" for creating another. The helpless world grudgingly goes along. The justification given is -- good and bad make the world. Why bother so much? 'What is done is done'. The interests are not only common; they overlap and hence the accommodation.

In an unusual Summit in Aqaba, Jordan on Wednesday, June 4 President Bush met Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister of Israel and Mahmood Abbas, Prime Minister of the Palestinian people. Jordan's King Abdullah-II was the host. The King received Sharon, the butcher of Lebanon's Sabra and Shatilla, on the same soil of Lebanon as the latter said he wanted to make peace with the Palestinians. Some days ago, for the first time he acknowledged that Israel was the "occupier" of the Palestinian land and the "moment has arrived to divide his tract of land between us and the Palestinians". By endorsing the "Road Map", designed by the Quartet -- the US, EU, Russia and the UN -- though with 14 reservations, the

Israeli government for the first time officially accepted the Palestinian claim for a Palestinian state. However, in a separate resolution, Israeli Cabinet rejected the provision in the Road Map of the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes in Israel.

President Bush, however, said very clearly during Summit in Sharm-al-Sheikh with some Arab leaders -- Syria and Lebanon were not invited, -- that "Palestinians

the Democrats gave him support for the Iraq war just to catch him afterwards on it with a view to going for a regime change in Washington. Iraq War-I brought down only one -- Senior Bush -- but Iraq War-II is likely to bring down at least four -- Bush, Blair, Aznar and Howard.

As it seems, Aqaba Summit on the 'Road Map' would not be able to take the peace forward. Caught in the whirlwind of internal tussles and external oppositions, Bush made a

one 'made to order' as per American specifications.

In the Summit press briefing, Prime Minister Abbas spoke of his efforts to stop Palestinian violence. Indeed, he promised to end *intifada* -- armed Palestinian uprising -- and to permit only the law enforcement officers to carry arms and not others. But he did not ask Sharon to stop Israeli violence -- open assassinations of so-called terrorists, destruction of Palestinian homes,

Sharon did not offer anything "tangible" in the Summit. Sharon's offer of removing some very temporary unauthorised settlements in the form of trailer homes was practically nothing as these trailer homes could be parked in another Palestinian hill top. Sharon did not commit anything in terms of dismantling settlements. He, however, said he would withdraw troops from some areas of Gaza; remove some road blocks

weeks' time, agree to a cease-fire, but the latest reports show Hamas has not only discarded any idea of cease-fire, it went into joint action with other radical groups and already carried out two suicide bombings -- one in Erez Crossing killing four Israeli soldiers and the other in Hebron killing one Israeli. Sharon has started facing serious challenges from the settlers. After these suicide bombings, Sharon said he would make no concession to the Palestinians. Bush Administration, however, said the gunmen cannot derail the Road Map for peace. This should be right approach and Sharon must start withdrawing forces from Palestinian cities and towns and this might help Abbas to advance his talks with Hamas and others.

Bush Administration's policy of going by Sharon's whims cannot take the Road Map forward. Arafat may be "irrelevant" to Sharon but for honestly pursuing the peace process through the Road Map, Bush Administration needs to be practical. Arafat is an elected leader and has been the Palestinian Leader for decades. The US cannot equate him with Saddam and discard him. The whole world recognises him. Therefore, it is simply nonsense to expect peace in the area without the participation of Arafat in the peace process. To satisfy Israel, the US could have avoided talking to Arafat directly as it decided to deal with Abbas who is not that popular with the Palestinians and was also not elected directly by the Palestinian people. The US should not have openly discarded Arafat who is a democratically elected leader of the Palestinian people. This vitiated the peace environment *ab initio*. Under the present situation, without any visible and substantial withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Palestinian cities and towns and dismantling of major settlements, the peace drive through Road Map will only meet with repeated road blocks -- peace will remain ever illusive.

Muslehuddin Ahmad is a former Secretary and Ambassador and founder president of North South University.

SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

The US should not have openly discarded Arafat who is a democratically elected leader of the Palestinian people. This vitiated the peace environment *ab initio*. Under the present situation, without any visible and substantial withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Palestinian cities and towns and dismantling of major settlements, the peace drive through Road Map will only meet with repeated road blocks -- peace will remain ever illusive.

must have continuous land that Palestinians can call home. The holy land must be shared by both Palestinians and Israelis". He also said the "US is committed and I am committed to the two-state solution -- Palestinian state living side by side with Israelis in peace and security". President Bush also asked Secretary Powell and Condoleezza Rice to take this task as the highest priority.

President Bush's commitment to the creation of the Palestinian state in 2005 is certainly a major shift in the US's foreign policy. This appears to be a calculated step with a view to calming down the enraged Arabs as a result of Iraq occupation. One has to see whether President Bush can keep up to his promise as his election year is approaching fast. He has also to take care of the blind Israeli supporters in the Capitol Hill, somewhat reluctant supporter, Colin Powell's State Department and hawkish American and also pro-Israeli Rumsfeld's Pentagon. He has also the looming tussle between Pentagon and the CIA on the issue of "doctoring" the intelligence report to support the Iraqi invasion. As we said before,

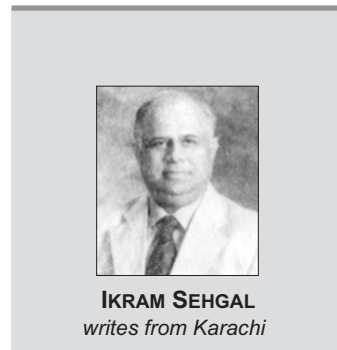
confusing start and short-circuited the peace process. Though he poses to be the "protector" of democracy he totally discarded President Arafat, democratically elected leader of the Palestinian people and brought in Mahmood Abbas also known as Abu Mazzen, relatively less known Palestinian negotiator who is alleged to be the

road blocks, searches and other forms of humiliation to people. He also did not raise the issues of Israeli rejection of Palestinians' right to return to their homes in Israel nor did he touch on the most important Palestinian claim of East Jerusalem, which is set to be the capital of the Palestinian State.

President Arafat remarked that



Contradiction and confrontation



IKRAM SEHGAL
writes from Karachi

WHEN the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) came together as an electoral entity, the ideological differences separating the six parties forming the alliance made it a practical incongruity. Skeptical as one was at seeing Islam's warring sects rent apart by years of mistrust uniting under one banner, this could only be possible because of genuine compromise. That fact alone was enough to lull us into believing that MMA's conduct, whether in governance or in parliamentary opposition, would mean consensus and tolerance would be prime motivating factors in keeping them in line with democratic norms. From time to time MMA did show some signs of intractability, but for most of the six months or so their was stable governance. The Mullahs have now discarded their cloak of tolerance, dashing any hopes that they would remain democratic and liberal in the tried and true spirit of Islam at its birth, and not act arbitrarily and convoluted according to their own narrow interpretation of religion. Having seen the Taliban regime across the border come to grief because of their excesses in enforcing their brand of Islam in Afghanistan, one had hoped (vainly it seems) that the MMA would have

learnt some lessons and been more discreet and circumspect.

The trigger for the present crisis was the wanton destruction of billboards in NWFP by government-incited inspired mobs that tore them down declaring them to be "indecent". There are many issues to be addressed here, the first being whether a government exercising its fiat through mobs in the streets is legal? Can any government incite (and inspire) street power to take the laws of the land in their own

Provincial Government, particularly in a country which thrives on the "client-patron relationship". Even though some of the District Nazims belonged to the MMA, all 24 District Nazims have written to the President threatening to resign because of the "undue interference" of the Provincial government, thus bringing them into direct confrontation with the Chief Minister of NWFP and his Cabinet. It is expected that a fair number of Nazims lower down the rung at the tehsil and town level will

Centre and the confrontation in the NWFP with the MMA, during his visit to US he will certainly be pressurised on any number of issues of US concern (and not necessarily come away closer to a solution of the core Kashmir issue). The Federal Budget is the least of his worries, an incentive-oriented, citizen-friendly and business-supportive initiative should go down very well domestically as well as abroad. Musharraf has been single-handedly steering us through a perilous course

advisors, atrocious personnel selection and U-turns in policies notwithstanding, who has stood between us and apocalypse Afghanistan and Iraq-style.

By unanimously passing the Shariah Bill the NWFP government has opened a Pandora's Box, Pakistan's Constitution is already governed by the Quran and Sunnah. Shariah Law has several different interpretations, these have been cause of violent controversy, the Supreme Court (SC) should

system in place in Pakistan. The collective minority vote of the six partners of the MMA overwhelmed the split vote of the three major parties, PPP, PML and NAP each of which had also split into two and even more factions. Can a 20 per cent minority of the population dictate what the majority 80 per cent (however divided) shall do? Even if there was 50 per cent plus of the vote the majority would have no right in a democracy to impose their will to change the entire way of life of the population (and the country's destiny in the modern comity of nations by a narrow motivated interpretation of the religion. Should we accept a minority rule if our democracy is imperfect? There is no nation on earth that cries out more for a run-off election between the first two candidates if any candidate fails to get 50 per cent plus of the votes cast. In this manner in every constituency the will of the majority will prevail, that is the essence of democracy. By adding proportional representation to the electoral melting pot, elected representatives will really represent the will of the electorate.

If there is anything that necessitates the President continuing in office in uniform for the time being, it is the present crisis. We may not like it but in the availing circumstances it is the only option we have to prevent the country dissolving into chaos and anarchy. The President needs the absolute support of the "great silent majority" and he does not need them to be sitting silently on the fence, silence will ensure that minority theocratic rule will overwhelm the moderate (but silent) majority. This country needs those who believe in its future to stand up and be counted!

Ikram Sehgal, a former Major of Pakistan Army, is a political analyst and columnist.

AS I SEE IT

By unanimously passing the Shariah Bill the NWFP government has opened a Pandora's Box, Pakistan's Constitution is already governed by the Quran and Sunnah. Shariah Law has several different interpretations, these have been cause of violent controversy, the Supreme Court (SC) should refer the Bill to the Federal Shariat Court under Article 203 of the Constitution. In the name of democracy the MMA wants to impose a collective theocratic dictatorship, and they would have us believe that this is all in the name of Islam.

hands, vandalising and / or destroying private property? Lastly given the arbitrary nature of mob rule delegated to it by the guardians of the law, what (and who) are the safeguards for the life, limb and property of the common citizen, not to talk about his / her rights of freedom of speech, of belief, of education, etc? There is no government on earth that can survive if it has lynch-mobs as the linchpin for its governance.

To add to prevailing complications in the body politic, the way the Local Bodies system has been structured at the grassroots level, governance was bound to come to a clash with the Provincial Government sooner rather than later. A fully empowered district government can hardly be expected to cede its prerogatives of authority to the

also follow suit. With the Federal Government changing the Chief Secretary (CS) and the Inspector General (IG) of Police, the NWFP Provincial Government is beleaguered on two fronts, with the Local Bodies within the Province and with the Federal Government at the national level. In actual practice the NWFP Government has been rendered almost powerless, one hopes that a cooling-off period will bring the JUI(F) dominated MMA Government to its senses. There is a sneaking suspicion the MMA deliberately tried provoking this crisis to mess up the President's impending visit to the US.

The President has a difficult month ahead, not only must he contend domestically with a constitutional crisis because of the Legal Framework Order (LFO) at the

through international hot waters, the profiles in not being bracketed with Iran and North Korea, countries labelled by the recent G-8 summit in Evian, France as cause for nuclear concern. Our policies have seldom been well thought out, when they have been, they are implemented badly. We may blame the Indians for tarring and feathering us for "cross-border" terrorism, it is we who have successfully blurred the fine-line between genuine "freedom struggle" and terrorism by pursuing bankrupt policies in the face of world perception having made a 180° turn after 9/11 in defining the concept of freedom struggle. India has gone to town to tarnish our reputation but did we expect otherwise in the face of what they take to be a "proxy war", did we expect them to turn the other cheek? It is Pervez Musharraf bad

refer the Bill to the Federal Shariat Court under Article 203 of the Constitution. In the name of democracy the MMA wants to impose a collective theocratic dictatorship, and they would have us believe that this is all in the name of Islam. They have a right to practice what they believe but they have no right to impose upon us their practices, that includes the de-emancipation of women who make up more than 50 per cent of our population, they want to even specify the type of dress we wear and what our children should learn in schools and colleges etc.

Well I have news for them, on the average they got only 11 per cent of the vote nation-wide and not more than 20 per cent of the votes cast in the two Provinces they have formed govts in on the extremely defective "first past the post" democratic

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.

Who made the comment?

In the "NATIONAL" page of June 10 there was a mistake on your part! "Four Party Alliance will last 25 years, says Noman" a news from Chittagong by the BSS. However, just below the heading, I found State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin making this comment in a meeting in Chittagong University on Sunday. Mr. Noman was not even present at that meeting. I wonder how the news editor of *The Daily Star* could forego this mistake?

Another news item concerning plantation of saplings in Chittagong, on the same page on the same day from the BSS where both Mr. Noman and Mr. ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury were present, but was published without any mention of date.

I like to point out here that, *Daily Star* in general fails to publish news of the previous day on the next day,

which is customary in publishing news items and most of the leading dailies published from Dhaka do that religiously. Moreover, the belated news items usually do not mention the dates of the events!

I hope *The Daily Star* will look into the matter, and rectify themselves. Sajjad Waheed Baridhara, Dhaka

SQ Chowdhury for OIC post?

The government has nominated Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, the Prime Minister's parliamentary affairs advisor, to run for the General Secretary of OIC. But there are many serious allegations against Mr. Chowdhury which makes him a very controversial person. There is even allegation against him that he was a collaborator of the occupied Pakistani forces in 1971 and he even openly opposed our Liberation War after the independence of the country.

Moreover, he has recently made some very objectionable remarks against our culture, women and regarding celebration of the International Mother Language Day.

How come this controversial character represents our country and how come the government nominated him for an important international post?

Topon Kumar Paul
The University of Tokyo, Japan

I really don't understand why the government has nominated Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury to compete for the post of Secretary General of OIC. Couldn't they find any one else rather than nominating this controversial character?

Against this 'might be' Secretary General of OIC, there are allegations of various sorts. He has been alleged of war crimes, made offensive remarks about the present PM and also made objectionable remarks about our women and culture!

So what is the argument behind nominating this person for an important international post?

Rubina Raihan
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

I want to know why the BNP government has nominated SQ Chowdhury for the Secretary General of OIC.

In the international arena the reputation of our country has been tarnished on many occasions. And still we suffer from credibility crisis in one way or another. What has the government done so far to improve our image? Rather they continue to take various other decisions which would not only tarnish our image further but would also create a lot of confusion regarding our government and nation.

Saihman Khan
Dhaka

Economics syllabus of National University

National University's economics syllabus needs to be updated. In this era of globalisation they are following a syllabus that is not connected to modern life and concepts. The present world scenario of education is information based, which is supplemented by Information Technology. But National University's Economics syllabus does not include "Introduction to Computer Science" and "E-Commerce" etc. Rather they consider "Introduction to Political Science", or "Introduction to Social Work" or "Sociology Introductory". Is there any utility of studying such courses in this century? How will this syllabus help the students?

I hope that National University will revise their traditional syllabus and introduce "Introduction to Computer Science" and "E-Commerce".

Shamim Ahmad
New Baily Road, Dhaka

Liberation of Iraq is not simply about WMD

In the current obsession about finding Iraq's WMD, it is forgotten that the terrorists who destroyed the WTC did not need WMD. On September 11, 2001, terrorists -- sponsored by al-Qaeda, with sanctuary and support of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan -- destroyed the WTC, damaged the Pentagon in Washington, crashed jetliners killing more than 3,000 unsuspecting civilians. They did not need any WMD to carry out their murderous assault.

The crucial element has been the sanctuary and logistic support that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan provided to plan and execute such an attack. The US now faces two new threats: emergence of terrorist organisations on a scale never seen before and rogue regimes willing to

collude. Terrorist organisations have allowed rogue regimes to privatise their foreign and defence policies. With rogue regimes providing financial and logistic support, terrorist groups are more than willing to carry out attacks on their common enemy -- the US.

The US cannot afford to wait for another September 11 to find out Saddam's links with terrorist organisations. His past records are enough. Also the US owes to the Iraqi people to liberate Iraq. It may be recalled that immediately after the First Gulf War in 1991, Iraq's Shiite majority, responding to a call by President George Bush Sr. to oust Saddam, rose in revolt. But instead of helping the rebels, Bush Sr. and his advisers stood by and let Saddam brutally crush the revolt. Thousands of Shiite Iraqis perished in Saddam's massive counter offensive and America bears historical responsibility for such a betrayal. By liberating Iraq, President George W. Bush has

redeemed America's betrayal of the Iraqi people. Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Canada

Singapore MTV

After BNP came to power, Singapore MTV channel was replaced by Indonesian MTV channel. But it was never clarified why they took such decision. Is there anything wrong with the programmes of Singapore MTV?

There are a lot of ardent viewers of Singapore MTV who don't find the Indonesian MTV channel up to the standard. So we request the authorities concerned to start airing Singapore MTV again or at least let us know why they banned it in the first place. RK, Dhaka