

LATE S. M. ALI **DHAKA SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 2003**

DMP check-posts

Matters must improve in some other areas also

HAKA Metropolitan Police has decided to set up more than 100 check-posts in its latest bid to curb crime in the city. The move follows a marked deterioration in law and order. The idea, we are told, is to chase the criminals using fast-moving vehicles by deploying mobile teams which will operate from the check-posts. Police are supposed to know how best they can handle the crime situation. The larger number of check-posts and the greater mobility of police should raise their level of efficiency.

But things must improve in some other areas also for the law enforcers to achieve their goals. First, illegal arms have to be recovered to blunt the firepower of the criminals. Here, success will depend on whether the supply lines of the lethal weapons can be cut off. Recent reports indicate that the arms trade has grown very big in the country. Obviously, the issue has a direct bearing on the crime situation. So police must concentrate on recovering illegal arms and closing the sources of their supply.

Second, the clout of the godfathers has to be curbed as these godfathers are the ones who patronise and protect criminals. The political parties have to initiate the process as most godfathers have political connections which they use to neutralise the law. This has been going on for many years, but the political parties have not yet embarked on any clear plan to deal with it. The problem stems from the fact that musclemen and hoodlums have a role in politics, regrettably though. There is reason to believe that law and order will never improve unless the parties reach an understanding on clearing the political arena of undesirable elements

Then the limitations of police are also far too conspicuous. The parliamentary standing committee on the home ministry has admitted that criminals outnumber police and outclass them in firepower. However, law and order cannot improve under such circumstances. Then the committee has also pointed out that financial constraints stand in the way of modernising police. But the decision-makers should realise that the slide in law and order is creating insurmountable problems for people, and, as such, the constraints have to be removed with a sense of urgency for the law-enforcing mechanism to perform better.

National film awards

Let recognition to good cinema encourage others

E must congratulate the jury members of the National Film Awards for appreciating good cinema, better cinema at a time when the film industry has been going through a rough patch. As recent as few weeks ago, the film industry was divided over the quality or standard of movies that are being churned out every week. One group blamed the other for the sorry state of affairs in the industry. But one important thing that both the sides seemed to have

Need for flexibility in Iraq

United States within Iraq. Stray signals coming out of Irag indicate that their opposition to arrangements being put in place within Iraq by the occupying forces will grow. Infighting has already led to massive bombings and fatalities.

What is worse is the gradual increase in fatalities among the Coalition troops. Some commentators in the US have alibly pointed out that the causalities are less than what is suffered in car accidents in most major US cities every day. This is not the point. This sort of comparison is irrelevant. This has HF Coalition needs to take a added another dimension to the

MUHAMMAD ZAMIR

greater objectivity. The fresh breeze

of impending autumn, sweeping the

lawns of Washington and the parks

of London is not blowing in the dusty

streets of Baghdad, Najaf, Kerbala

Many months ago I had written

that winning the war might be easy

but it will be more difficult to deal

with peace. I had also mentioned

that in victory, the coalition should

be more magnanimous. Unfortu-

nately for the Iraqis and the rest of

restlessness beneath the superficial

calm in many areas of Irad. Some

have suggested that the afterwar

situation in Iraq is partially due to the

fact that the majority of the Iraqi

Army never surrendered and just

melted away. It is being mentioned

that these remnants are now

regrouping and carrying out the

'subversive' acts. Others are

claiming that the Iragis are really

barring a few, guite happy with what

has happened to Saddam and are

not involved in these attacks on the

occupying forces. The 'insurgency'

is really being led by foreign

country is supposed to be under

Whatever be the explanation,

without basic facilities, unemploy-

community. They have generally

unhappy with the current role of the

military occupation.

the world, this is not happening.

or Basra.

step back and review matters

as they stand in Iraq with

asking all sorts of questions.

conflict. The US now finds itself in the difficult role of having to carry out

such spending. Similarly, 53 per It is now understood that Jay cent have opposed an increase to Garner's assumption that the figure being spent. About 48 per everything will be done within three cent have also pointed out that the months was way of the mark. The United States should withdraw face-saving reaction that the military personnel because of the Coalition will be there 'as long as it attacks takes' is also creating its own It is against this scenario that the dynamics and unfulfilled expecta-American Administration has to look tions. Poor Paul Bremer, otherwise at the broad picture. It is clear that an able man, today finds himself their unilateral action was 'understaffed and under-funded', undertaken with some degree of with a seriously upset Congress haste. Nevertheless, whatever has

happened. It was not the best Public opinion in the US is restive manner of doing things, but now the today. There is deep concern in pieces have to be put together for Washington about the prospect of the sake of future prosperity, peace the US getting bogged down in Iraq. and stability of Iraq in particular and the region in general.

On 4 September, after their Summit in Dresden, the French and German Heads of Government have reiterated their commitment to abide by the wishes of the United Nations. So has Russia. What is at stake here is the recognition that the United Nations should not just have a facilitating role but should be actively associated with the political process. The White House needs to also embrace the soft side of power.

counter-terrorism efforts in addition Four months after the war to stabilisation. allegedly ended, there is still a lot of

In this context we must not forget Henry Kissinger's dictum: 'The guerrilla wins by not losing. The army loses by not winning'. Fareed Zakaria has pointed out very well in the Newsweek of 8 September that 'the purpose of the guerrilla operations is not to defeat the enemy military. It is to defeat him politically'. He was one of those who supported the operations in Iraq from Day One, and also believed staunchly that the Coalition could do everything by themselves and that the rest of Europe and many other countries were just cry babies. Now there is a slight change in tone.

terrorists entering Iraq from other It had been anticipated by some countries. This is difficult to in February this year, that stability understand, given the fact that the would have been achieved in Irag by this time this year and that American presence would have been scaled down to about 40,000 troops. For matters as they stand today, do not the first time reason is beginning to raise confidence. Large sections of dawn in some of those involved in the Iraqi civilian population are policy making. It is now realised that the Coalition Forces, particularly the ment has not really been reduced US, is really over-stretched in Iraq and the infrastructure is far from and that they need help for the long stable. Added to this is the growing haul. It is also very clear that dissatisfaction within the Shi'ite additional American troops cannot be sent there, not only because of been happy with the demise of the financial reasons but also because past Iraqi government but very there is an election coming up next

kicking up a fuss about being left in the dark about the ultimate costs of the occupation. It may be mentioned here that such expenditure is already over Dollar one billion a week. It is also being speculated that estimates of the cost of repairing and improving Iraqi oil facilities are between \$5 billion and \$10 billion. Upgrading the Iragi infrastructure will also cost more than \$30 billion. All these figures assume particular significance when one realises that reportedly 95 per cent of current expenditure in Irag is from US sources and that they are suffering 90 per cent of the casualties. It is also important to note that even today after the presence of Polish troops, almost 85 per cent of the foreign troops in Irag are from the USA

Some US legislators are already

The change in mood within the United States was most evident in results published after a Gallup Poll on 24 August. For the first time the Poll found that more registered voters, 49 per cent, would not want Bush to return for a second term in office if elections were held now Compared to this 44 per cent still continued to favour him. Americans are also beginning to think that reconstruction costs in Iraq are too high and 66 per cent do not support

There are consequences which need to be dealt with from a multilateral perspective and the United nations is the best bet. Some neo-cons might continue to snigger about the inefficacy of the United Nations and the importance of the US holding on to a 'central' role. They are right and they are also wrong.

Today, the US is the pre-eminent power in the world. There is no doubt about it. No one disputes it. However, there are also important factors like equality, sovereignty and respect for international law and conventions. These elements create a level playing field. All nations, powerful or less influential, need to abide by rules. The key is the United Nations, created with the active support of the American Administration. It is also the ultimate face-saving mechanism.

under UN leadership, with an Today, after the bombing of the American as the UN Commander' UN Headquarters in Baghdad and He has also suggested that his own the tragic loss of lives in that personal preference would be a compound, the United Nations personnel are quite correctly anxious about their security and Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey, their role within the emerging Iraq. and perhaps be headed by the Norwegians. It is also being The coalition has created a proposed that such a force could Governing Council and now a list of ministers. Unfortunately, both these groups consist mostly of people the overall security of the UN who dislike each other and who personnel in Iraq

have never worked together. It will also be difficult for them to gain de iure recognition given the absence of the will of the people. President Mubarak of Egypt has already indicated general Arab opinion by stating that there should be an elected Governing Council which alone will have the potential and capability to help restore calm and

order. The chances are that common Iragis on the street share this feeling that the Council has been thrust upon the population by occupying forces. This implies every chance of chaos continuing in the streets and the system of justice, consisting of courts, police and a legal system not

coming into force. This brings forth

the undesirable prospect of matters

getting worse, opening the door for

The US Administration might

have hoped that the outrage over

the devastating bombing of the

United Nations compound in Iraq

would make the Security Council

more amenable to a Resolution

explicitly welcoming a cosmetic

broadening of the US led coalition

in Iraq. However, contradictory

signals between the Departments of

State and Defence have not helped

It would be interesting to refer

here to recent remarks by former US

Permanent Representative to the

United Nations, Richard C.

Halbrooke. He has significantly

pointed out that the way out would

be to have a 'multi-national force

multinational force that would

include representations from India

also have the dual role of assuming

nore terrorism

matters.

What we need to understand is a basic point. The important aspect should not be the specific structure but the need to create a system that would allow many other nations to join the military effort in Iraq without totally undermining current coalition interests in Iraq.

Holbrooke feels that compro mises are necessary and the US must understand that it is in their national interest to do so. His argument is based on the premise that such a step will reduce costs for the Coalition and permit them to gain some degree of order out of a auaamire.

Fortunately, in recent weeks we have seen the re-emergence of some degree of reason through the efforts of Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Secretary of State Colin Powell. The US is looking for meaningful partners who can make a significant difference. It would appear that they are trying to harness greater international support by appreciating the concerns of the international community

However, the US is still hesitating about going the distance. It is difficult to understand this approach. They do not have to prove anything to anybody, so why this unease about ceding or sharing political and military control and allowing the United Nations to play a more meaningful role. On 4 September, after their Summit in Dresden, the French and German Heads of Government have reiterated their commitment to abide by the wishes of the United Nations. So has Russia. What is at stake here is the recognition that the United Nations should not just have a facilitating role but should be actively associated with the political process.

The White House needs to also embrace the soft side of power. An America that wants to transform the Middle East, will need to have more nations with it. It also has to understand that 'Old Europe' is not against it and that association of only 'New Europe' and some states dependent on the USA financially or militarily will not assure success in Iraq and in the region. The war against terror needs a proader consensus.

Muhammad Zamir is a former Secretary and mbassador

'Do not speak ill of the dead'

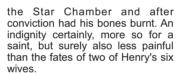
for the deed.

MEGASTHENES

ARLY in the last century, one Lord Kitchener served as Commander-in-Chief of the British Indian Army -- a position which in the official hierarchy ranked behind only the Viceroy himself. Kitchener had distinguished himself as a soldier and administrator in Sudan, Egypt and also in the Boer War in South Africa. In Sudan he had defeated the forces of Al-Mahdi in the Battle of Omdurman. His assignment in India was at the specific instance of that most impe-Curzon, of whom had been composed at Oxford a doggerel, which to his discomfiture, dogged him for much of his public life: "My name is George Nathaniel

bearing him on a mission to Russia rhino or elephant. Human dignity was struck by a German mine and surely warranted something more he drowned at sea. Years earlier in edifying. Sudan, he had the body of the slain Pan Singh Tomar fell into a

Mahdi disinterred and cut into special category of "baghi" or rebel, pieces. Was it to cow the local as dacoits are at times described. population into servility? Or was it to He had been a soldier by profession quench some atavistic craving or and also an Asian Games bronze medallist in a track and field event. instinct in the man? Winston Churchill, not exactly a squeamish After retirement he returned to his person himself, expressed distaste village, became victim of some injustice or slight and took to the life



Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell(1599-1658) had as lavish a funeral as any in Britain and was buried in Westminster Abbey. A mere two years later, with the restoration of Stuart rule, his

NAM and the OIC were all united in an unholy conspiratorial cabal, the object of which was to subvert the US and promote terror, it was a wrong war, an avoidable war that was visited on the hapless people of Iraq. Iraq today is an occupied country or a liberated country. It cannot be both. With foreign troops and tanks patrolling cities and executive authority vested in a foreign administrator, the situation

enemies die, for the day will also come when your friends will die". The second was anecdotal. An eminent US Senator of the 19th century, possibly Daniel Webster, when asked to comment on the passing of an old political adversary had tartly observed : "When the Almighty Himself lays His hands on someone Sir, I take mine off". But then times change, as also norms and values, perhaps not always for the better though. For 30 pieces of silver Jesus Christ was betraved For Uday and Qusay the figure was a more munificent \$30,000,000 allowing maybe for inflation over two

thousand years and also for an

exponential increase in human



overlooked was the reason for the sorry state.

Going to the theatres had always been a favourite pastime for all -- lower class, middle class and upper class alike. But not any more, at least for the middle class. The upper class lost interest long ago with the invasion of video and cable television. It wasn't really so bad until five years ago when suddenly a wave of technically bad low budget mainstream movies with vulgar dances, lewd dialogues and unbelievable action sequences swamped the theatres. And the lower class with no other option for recreation thronged to watch those lurid movies and encouraged by the box office success, producers were even more enthusiastic to make similar type of films. But recently those films have been crashing at the box office proving the adage that bad things never last for long.

And now the national awards to the meaningful cinema as well as commercial business by some of such movies should be enough for them to realise that their days are over. Though the national awards itself has not been spared from controversies, but nevertheless patronisation and recognition at the highest level would be a big boost for the makers of good cinema and technicians. Such recognition may not be welcome for the makers of the recent commercial movies, but we can only hope they will wake up to the realisation that film-making is not only about making money, it's also about providing wholesome entertainment to the people.

Curzon, I am a most superior person,

My cheek is pink, my hair is sleek I dine at Blenheim once a week".

Kitchener could not have been very personable or companionable as an individual. By all accounts he was testy and querulous, averse to a collegial approach to decisionmaking and loath to delegate authority. He has been variously described as ruthless and uncouth but then his exploits in South Africa and Sudan, that made of him a public hero, did not quite call for iberal measures of "ruth" or 'couthness"

It was not too long before the Viceroy and his Commander-in-Chief were at loggerheads over policy and when the British Cabinet upheld Kitchener, the "most superior person" resigned. He was to hold high office again but after a period in the political wilderness. Kitchener, though disgruntled at not being named Viceroy, soldiered on. He moved up the pecking order of Peers, attained the rank of Field Marshal and was named Secretary of State for War during World War I. True to form, he "guarrelled endlessly with 23 gentlemen" -- his Cabinet colleagues -- who became less and less enamoured with him. One wonders if he was missed or deeply mourned when the cruiser

LIGHTEN UP

There are treaties and conventions aplenty regulating behaviour among nations and peoples. I am not aware of any treaty, however, that pertains to humane treatment of mortal remains. One wonders if there lived in ancient times, wise and compassionate people, who may have put together an understanding -- tacit or more formal -- in this regard, something that may have been lost in time.

The ravines of the Chambal region in North India have long been dacoit-infested. This is or was as much a socio-economic as a law and order problem. A few dacoits have even been celebrated in legend and lore as fighters for social justice. One such dacoit leader, decades back, was Chhabiram A couplet was written about him: "Jab thak bhukha kissan rahega, Tab thak ek Chhabiram rahega"(So long there are hungry peasants, there will always be a Chhabiram). Chhabiram died a dacoit's death, in a shoot-out with the police. Later some in the police party that hunted him down, commented on his coolness and courage under fire and his tactical acumen as he sought vainly to elude the vastly superior force that was pursuing him. His fate may have been inevitable, even deserved. What grated on sensitivities, however, was a picture taken by a camerahappy person that was carried by a few papers. It showed the leader of the police party in a proud pose with the corpse of Chhabiram at his feet, reminiscent of an old time big-game hunter, gun in hand and one foot firmly on the trophy -- lion, tiger

of a dacoit. His end too was typical for a dacoit. His picture after death appeared in a few papers with an identification tag tied to a toe. A sports celebrity, who had devoted the prime years of his life to a vocation that is honourable and heroic, come to such a pass! "How art thou fallen...O Lucifer son of the morning"! Pan Singh had paid his debt to society, paid for his transgressions and dearly so. Was the display of his remains in the manner of a stuffed trophy also part of his punishment and penance? Pope Formosus (816-896) was

buried with papal honours when he died. Less than a year later, at the instance of Roman co-emperor Lambert, a "cadaveric synod" was convened to declare his five-year pontificate illegal. The late Pope had actually dared to establish Lambert's rival Arnulf as coemperor! Formosus' remains were exhumed for trial and, after a guilty verdict, stripped of papal array and tossed into the Tiber Thomas Becket (1118-1170), the

slain Archbishop of Canterbury, was canonised a mere three years after death. 350 years on, Henry VIII had his skeleton tried for treason before

remains were savagely disinterred and beheaded for the crime of regicide -- an incredible eight strokes of the executioner's axe needed for the purpose. His severed head was impaled and put on display at the roof of Westminster Hall, where it stayed for 24 years Charles II no doubt was gratified.

One would imagine that morbid games with human remains would be merely a grisly anachronism in the 21st century. Not so. We have had recently the instances of Uday and Qusay, the sons of Saddam Hussein, Neither, if reports about them are even fractionally accurate. would be a beau-ideal. And yet they were human beings. They perished in the face of vastly superior firepower and numbers.

It is for dispassionate scholars of the future to determine definitively whether the war on Iraq was justified. At this time the uncomfortable feeling persists in the minds of many that unless the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, former Presidents and Nobel Laureates Mandela and Carter, Privy Councillors and former Cabinet Ministers Robin Cook and Claire Short, Hans Blix and Kofi Annan, the

obtaining in Iraq would conform to any dictionary definition of 'occupied" rather than "liberated" But going back to Uday and

Qusay. Photographs of their mangled remains were gleefully published and their spruced up corpses put on display for ournalists. The suggestion was mooted -- shades of Lord Kitchener - that their remains could not be buried unless claimed by family. Ordinary decency did prevail in the end and both were buried in their home village. Their tombs were shown on TV, draped in national colours. The "world's mightiest mortal",

who is also the "fastest oun alive" an awesome combination of attributes -- rejoiced unabashedly in the deaths of these two men, as did his staunchest and stoutest -- not corporeally -- acolyte from across the ocean. Perhaps the "born again Christian" forgot the Biblical exhortation : "If thine enemy hunger feed him: if he thirst, give him drink..." Somewhat incongruously two things came to mind. The first was an old saying that a friend told me long ago was prevalent among Sikhs. "Do not rejoice if your

needs and avarice There is a saying in Latin that has come down from antiquity and generally attributed to the "Seven Sages"(c650-550BC) of old : "De mortuis nil nisi bonum". Or in English, "Of the dead nothing but good". More popularly, "Do not speak ill of the dead". There are treaties and conventions aplenty regulating behaviour among nations and peoples. I am not aware of any treaty, however, that pertains to humane treatment of mortal remains. One wonders if there lived in ancient times, wise and compassionate people, who may have put together an understanding -- tacit or more formal -- in this regard, something that may have been lost in time. Experts are, after all, agreed that the extant works of Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus represent a mere fraction of their literary output -- of their other works there is no trace. In any case, could a saying so concise compassionate and pithy as "De

mortuis nil nisi bonum" have

emanated from a vacuum?

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

TO THE EDITOR 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.

A better option

Much talk about the magnetic elevated train has been going on and at this point, I would like to draw our communication minister's attention to the fact that the trains that pass through the city cause huge traffic jams, not to mention the time loss. We know that the government has been building some flyovers in several places to avoid the rail crossings and I believe introduction of magnetic train can serve as an alternative in this regard, though surely a costly one.

Has the government or the railway authorities ever considered to assess the viability of building

some underground (or lower than the existing road level), track way to avoid the prevailing traffic problems? I know in many countries such system exist. If this is a viable option, I presume, it could be a lot cheaper than building flyovers. The rail crossing near Dhaka cantonment staff road and the crossing of main airport road to Baridhara-Rampura often create traffic jams. I wonder if these two rail crossings could slowly be sloped down to under the road level and then come up again. I trust this could be a cheaper than building a flyover. Anyway, I would request our communication minister to consider

the viability of such endeavours as he

is very much active in cutting travel time for the commuters. Anis S Ahmad, On e-mail

Abbreviating Bangladesh

Bangadesh is abbreviated in different ways by different bodies the way they like. Say for example TV Sports Channel calls BAN. TV Entertainment Channel calls BNG and many other national and international agencies call it BD. Some websites even write BDS. I feel this very much humiliating

May be this is not anything new. But, isn't it important to standardise the abbreviation strictly by the govern-

ment of Bangladesh? If so, I would suggest it should be universally called BD. Saeedur Rahman

Bangladesh Water Development Board, Dhaka

Our good police

have read many ludicrous comments made by Bangladeshi officials, but probably this is the best (or worst, depends on the perspective) one. According to The Daily Star report a top police official said "it is not possible for police to stop 'target murder' unless advance information is received" So are the police implying that they

they know it beforehand? In that case how are they going to know about future crimes? Are they thinking of having something like the film "Minority Report"? If not, then what the police is implying is that we all are at risk of being murdered if someone 'targets' to kill us.

are there to just stop crime only when

Hmm... so why are we paying the police? So that they don't have to catch the murderer while we are murdered? Something doesn't sound right

K. Talat S. Islam, On e-mail **BOI** response to

Japanese allegations

The sorry state of the investment climate in Bangladesh, as was depicted in a survey by the Japanese trade body in Dhaka, calls for greater scrutiny and soul-searching on our part. No matter how hard we try increasing foreign investment in the country, we are not going to achieve it unless we are serious in providing an investment-friendly environment in the country. And when the very investors speak out about the environment, it is in our best interests to listen to them.

It was not wise on the part of BOI to challenge the observations of the Japanese investors when everyone of us knows that the allegations were nothing but facts. Don't we

know that almost no service from the government can be obtained without paying something to the concerned officials? BOI could have given extra efforts in reaching out to the investors and in publicising its services like the one-stop desk at ZIA instead of writing to the Japanese Embassy rejecting the allegations. It does not help in our efforts to attract foreign investment when the trade union demands money from foreign investors in the middle of their meeting with senior management of a public entity 'Petrobangla union leaders demand toll from Unocal', DS Sept 5). What does it speak of our investment climate?

Our investment policies in pape may be one of the most investmentfriendly in the region, but their implementation on the ground is anybody's guess. If we are really serious about nviting foreign investment in the country, we should think rationally, find out the problems that the investors are facing, and do our best to rectify those problems. Otherwise, foreign nvestment will remain as elusive as it is today.

Zubair Sadeque

Duquesne University, Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, USA