

## McKinnon's observations

### Food for thought there

COMMONWEALTH Secretary General Don McKinnon has shed light on the issue of developing a 'collaborative approach' between the government and the opposition. Obviously, it is crucially important to politics in every democratic context.

After all that has happened over the last few days centring around the opposition's decision to boycott the CPA conference, the question as to where things went wrong is asked by many. The fault lines must be detected and taken care of to avoid such embarrassment in future.

McKinnon has analysed the situation critically on the basis of the ground reality prevailing in some Commonwealth countries, including Bangladesh. His observations are basically focussed on the attitudinal problems of both the ruling and the opposition parties in the emerging democracies. He has pointed out-- and there are very few among us who would not be convinced by his argument--that there cannot be any working relationship between the government and the opposition as long as election victory is viewed as a license to capture all "democratic and state structures". Similarly, the highly negative attitude of the opposition often reduces it to the role of a 'spoiler' detrimental to democracy.

The observations need a little elaboration. The ruling party has to shun its 'acquisitive' character, while the opposition's task is to place national interests above party politics.

One of the focal points of the CPA meet is to evolve ways and means of forging partnerships among the Commonwealth countries for the collective good of people, one-third of whom live on less than one dollar a day. However, the bigger issue of bringing the nations closer to each other should be preceded by a streamlining of national politics, which is a source of endless worry in many societies. Partnership between the government and the opposition can go a long way to ensuring peace and prosperity that have eluded several Commonwealth nations despite introduction of democratic systems.

Things are not changing fast in our context, as antagonism remains the most distinctive feature of the relationship between the government and the opposition. The two major political parties are expected to interact as forces complementing, and not denuding each other.

## Railway ticket money Embezzled

### Fraud scales a bizarre new height

THIS is a tale of shrewdly contrived spiriting away of fare receipts to the tune of Tk Five crore by a racket within the Railways. Making out fraudulent pension payment orders (PPO) -- obviously in the names of fictitious railway retirees that huge amount of sale proceeds from tickets was expropriated allegedly by a Kamalapur rail-station master in collusion with other railway employees. The big sum has been realised in fake names from January 2001 to July of the current year.

An investigation conducted by top-level railway officials has uncovered this sensational and unprecedented story. The inquisition involved scrutiny of one lakh copies of vouchers accompanied by questioning of 14 railway officials and staff members. Initially, at a lower level, however, there was something of a hush-hush with at best a vague pointer to an act of misfeasance; whereupon the higher railway authorities put their feet down ordering a top-level inquiry. As a result, we come to know of the skeletons in the cupboard. The top-bass of the railway deserves thanks for their persistence and boldness, the latter because they hadn't buckled under any trade union pressure, imagined or real.

We notice though that the corrupt elements were going about their business for a long time unseen and undetected by any eye. Were they stopped in their tracks by a timely intervention, the railway exchequer wouldn't have been poorer by Tk five crore. Lack of routine inspection, supervision and monitoring has been the root-cause behind proliferation of corruption in most public sector undertakings. In sectors having daily over-the-counter receipts, it's a culpable offence not to keep a tab on the ledgers. Besides, the railways rolling stocks and real estate assets are worth crores of Taka. On the whole, therefore, a very high premium is placed on anti-corruption measures.

There will be further investigation into the pension scandal, and hopefully, deterrent punishment would be meted out to those found guilty.

M. SHAHIDUL ISLAM

THE unprovoked Israeli attack against Syria added a new dimension to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. It has pushed the conflict one rung up in the escalation ladder. The rationale behind this escalation is that the Jewish state has the means and ability to hit anyone with impunity due to its possession of a nuclear stockpile which no other Arab nation has acquired as yet.

Having shown its thumbs for decades to the UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 that demanded unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in the 1967 war, Israel chose a strategy to spread the conflict beyond its borders.

The attack on Syria also comes on the heel of Israel's failure in stemming the tide of the Palestinian *Intifada* and the US-UK stagnation in Iraq. The US-UK-Israeli act in concert in the Middle East and the attack could not have taken place without US' nod, as was seen from the US' stand following Syria's request to condemn the attack in the UNSC.

The strategy behind this escalation is simple; Iraq decapitated, Syria and Iran remain the two other nations to stand by the Palestinians. While the IAEA has begun to tighten nooses against Iran, Israel sought to draw Syria into the fray to spark a major conflagration in the Mid-East to prolong US-UK presence in Iraq.

Before the First and Second World Wars, high stake escalation games of this nature were played to sort out major geopolitical ambitions of militarily superior nations by turning small irritations into major conflicts. The Mid-East seems to be heading inexorably toward the end of such a dreadful precipice.

### Evolution of a 'blackmail strategy'

Israel had used its fusion prowess to intimidate and blackmail neighbours since the late 1970s. Simon Peres, former Israeli Prime Minister, confessed that, "In 1979, during the peace talks with Egypt, one of Anwar Sadat's assistants admitted to the Israeli deputy prime minister, Yigal Yaldin, and to then defence minister (later president), Ezer Weizman, that Egypt's decision to talk peace had definitely been influenced by the Dimona Project." The Dimona project contains Israel's nuclear research hub.

A favourite notion in the evolution of nuclear strategy is that the best way to dissuade an enemy from using an obnoxious weapon is to preserve an option of reprisal in kind.

The fear of reprisals encouraged restraint over the use of gas during Second World War.

Israel knows that monopoly in a particular type of terror weapon dower an added advantage against an adversary not equipped with such firepower. The West used this stratagem over the last half-a-century while dealing with weaker nations.

This strategic advantage propelled Israel in 1967 to wipe out the airforces of neighbouring states in a series of preemptive attacks. In 1982, another preemptive Israeli strike destroyed Iraq's Osirak reactor. And, by invading Lebanon in the same year, Israel managed to get the US involved in the Lebanese conflict. The US withdrew from Lebanon the

from attacking North Korea due to the latter's possession of nuclear deterrence while Iraq was attacked due to it's inability to hit back the US.

The same rationale is said to have prevented a major conflagration between India and Pakistan since 1971 despite Pakistan being much weaker in conventional military power. While such an assertion remains to be probed, the nuclear strategy has evolved within a 'balance of terror' paradigm, that, 'any first strike by an adversary will be reprised in kind, making the anticipated gains from such attacks costlier and meaningless.'

An understanding of Arab political dynamic can be misplaced unless the Palestinian conflict is used as a

**The scenarios highlight the magnitude of dangers involved should the Mid East conflict spin out of control to degenerate into a major war. Hence, the UNSC should strive to compel Israel to comply with all the resolutions it had flouted over the decades to ensure a semblance of fair play in the precarious global order.**

same year only after 261 marines died from a single suicide bomb attack.

Consequently, despite the importance of nuclear deterrence having waned considerably at the end of the Cold War, many weaker nations developed worrisome sensibilities against the US and the Israeli excesses in a global system devoid of any credible balance of power.

During the Cold War, militarily weaker nations were shielded by a stable balance of power, which the so-called unipolarity had eluded them. The weaker nations' threat perception heightened further since the early 1990s.

In 1991, Iran declared in the OIC meeting that, 'Since Israel continues to possess nuclear weapons, we the Muslims must cooperate to produce an atom bomb.' The theory had a familiar ring with the Pakistani rationale that sought an 'Islamic bomb' to counter the twin threats emanating from the Jewish and the Hindu bombs possessed by Israel and India respectively.

Syria endorsed the Iranian scheme, only to be listed by the US as a 'rogue state' along with Iran. However, the fallout of this expressed Iranian intent echoed with a bang in the Western capitals. Some Western scholars even went to the extent to say, "Islam would end up playing nuclear Russian roulette with Hinduism in South Asia, and with Zionism in the Middle East."

### Credible deterrence

A popular perception in the developing world is that the US backtracked

yardstick to gauge the convoluted proclivities of Arab nation-states governed by regimes ranging from the ultra left Arab Baathist to the fanatical Islamic fringes.

The post-Shah Iran became so attached to the Palestinian cause that the very first foreign guest to visit Tehran after the 1979 Iranian revolution was Yasser Arafat. Iran also aids the *Hizbollah* guerrillas to prevent Israeli occupation of Lebanon, as does Syria. Israeli excesses compelled these two diverse ideological trends to act in unison.

Syria is not known for harbouring a nuclear ambition. But, Iran's quest for such a deterrence dates back to the 1980s; as Egypt's Arab leadership was crushed by the Camp David treaty of 1978, leaving a void to be filled by some one else.

The post-Camp David Middle East was thus left in the lurch for decades to mourn over its strategic imbalance with Israel. And, following Iraq's defeat in the 1980-88 war with Iran, and Iraq's 1991 invasion of Kuwait having ended in further disaster, Iran took the lead to emerge as a regional power. The Iranian revolution being anti-US in its intent and manifestation, presence of US troops in the Mid East posed a major threat to the Iranian political leadership from the outset.

**Israel's nuclear stockpile**  
Viewed from the trends of Israeli militarisation, the Iranian ambition to go nuclear seems a reactive one. Soon after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Israel armed its MGM-55C Lance missiles with nuclear warheads. And,

by the early 1980s, Israel had 12 Lance-transporter-erector launchers and at least 36 missiles armed with nuclear warhead. The technology came from the US army's W-70 nuclear variety.

Israel also armed a number of battlefield weapons, including 175 and 203 mm cannons, with nuclear artillery. Israel's nuclear artillery capability includes enhanced radiation variants, which are forbidden for use by the laws of war. In the early 1980s, Israel equipped its Jericho surface- to- surface missiles with 1,000-1,500 pound nuclear warheads. While the IAEA and the US now squeeze Iran to stay away from the nuclear course, the US is yet to say a word about the Israeli stockpile

mallow-up public opinion. Although most of the reports later get discarded as being hyped-up, fabricated and concocted, they do help create demons out of some one the US and Israel loathe.

Of the victims of such media onslaught, Colonel Nasser (in the 1960s), Gaddafi (in the 1970s), Arafat (in the 1980s), Khomeini (in the 1990s) and Saddam (in recent years) top the list. A non-state actor, Osama Bin Laden, is the latest 'malefactor' to have earned the US' wrath.

The Iraqi WMD case proved how sinistrerly the Western media behave under the influence of their intelligence services. Iran, Libya and Syria have been on the receiving end of

of about 200 plutonium weapons.

Over the decades, Israel had perfected its nuclear research to boost the yield of its fission weapons in excess of 100 kilotons and achieved a capability to build a fusion weapon of its own. The IAEA is aware of Israel's clandestine WMD programme, but feels handicapped to confront the Jewish state due to the US' unqualified backing for it.

Since the early 1990s, Israel's Jericho-2 missiles became capable of hitting targets 1500 km away, with a 1500 kiloton payload. The Jericho-3 was tested in 2000. It traveled 2,500 km with 100 kg payload. Even the Mediterranean city of Tripoli is under its effective range.

It's only natural amid such a strategic imbalance that someone would strive to catch up with Israel in bringing about some sort of symmetry in the regional balance of power. And, unless that expected balance is restored, peace in the Middle East will remain ever elusive.

The nuclear frenzy also has a lot to do with the US' physical intervention in the Mid East, and, having scoured Iraq unsuccessfully to locate the WMD, the US is buying the Sharon theory that 'Iraq's WMD is hidden in Syria.' This seems to offer a plausible reason as to why Israel chose to attack Syria 30 years after the conclusion of the 1973 war.

### Does Iran too have a bomb?

A commonly observed tactic in the West is to splash intelligence reports in the media to test waters and

such Western propaganda for decades. And, ever since President Rafsanjani signed a nuclear collaboration pact with China during his Beijing visit in September 1992, the US and the UK launched an unsavoury media and diplomatic offensive to prove Iran's nuclear capability.

Reports claimed that China supplied nuclear technology and information to Iran, trained Iranian scientists and engineers and provided Iran with a calutron- enriching- device to produce bombs.

North Korea then agreed, claimed such reports, to supply Iran with 600-mile range Nodong-1 missile in 1993. In 1995, after sustained US pressures, China suspended the sale of two 300-MW reactors, but the North Koreans shipped Scud missiles and aided Iran in building its own capability to produce the same.

Indigenous Iranian missiles are now capable of hitting Tel Aviv, say the reports. If the reports were true, why did Iran sign a protocol in 1995 with the Russian federation to conduct peaceful nuclear researches? Heaven perhaps knows better.

Subsequent revelations also had it that Iran possessed a small 27 kilowatt Chinese supplied neutron source research reactor and subcritical assemblies with 900 grams of highly enriched uranium at its Esfahan Nuclear center. The center also contains a heavy water zero-power reactor, a high water subcritical reactor and a graphite subcritical reactor. Besides, the University of Tehran is reported to house a 5 megawatt, high water reactor that Iran purchased from

Argentina.

Rumours also abound, as they did with respect to Iraq, that Iran might have a bomb or two in the basement. Hence the hurry-scurry by the IAEA to find excuses to launch preemptive attacks against Iran too.

### Impact on Asia

The Israeli strain of preemptive attack is dangerous for world peace due to the precedent it creates to endanger many weaker nations having disputes with the nuclear armed ones. Precisely due to that, China took a principled stand not to allow nuclear monopoly to the West until its signing of the NPT in 1992. The North Korean bomb was allowed to sprout under such a liberalised Chinese attitude.

India too sought to deprive the West of a nuclear monopoly. The 'meeting of minds' on this particular issue between China and India prompted China to help India (with which it fought a war in 1962) with 130-150 metric tons of heavy water (D20) between 1982-87 and Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) and uranium enrichment services for Tarapur nuclear project in 1995.

The latter deals were concluded under the IAEA safeguard while the D20 was not. India possesses an impressive array of nuclear stockpile; consisting Agni-1, Agni-2 and the Surya missiles, each capable of hitting targets as far away as 1500, 2000, 3250 km, respectively. Each of these missiles can carry a payload of, respectively, 1000, 1000 and 1500 kg.

Pakistan's missile technology is even superior to India and there is a reason for it. The Pakistani deterrence is designed to shield the Arabs in the instance Israel threaten its Arab neighbours with nuclear strike. The first \$36 million contribution for the Pakistani bomb came from Libya.

Today, Islamabad holds in its armoury the Shaheen-2 and Gauri-3 missiles, each with an effective ranges of 2500 and 3500 km respectively. Pakistan is working to replicate the Nodong-3 variety of North Korea that can hit targets 4,000 km away. As it is, the Pakistani missiles can hit Tel Aviv and Haifa.

The above scenarios highlight the magnitude of dangers involved should the Mid East conflict spin out of control to degenerate into a major war. Hence, the UNSC should strive to compel Israel to comply with all the resolutions it had flouted over the decades to ensure a semblance of fair play in the precarious global order.

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# The rise of Al-Jazeera and its controversies

MANZUR ELAHI

with Al-Jazeera and have co operations.

Although it was known to the western world only in 2001, from the very beginning of establishment in 1996 it had been the centre of attention among Arabs. Ever since its birth, Al-Jazeera has been criticised, vilified, boycotted and harassed by Arab governments and media as well as the US administration because of its bold, uncensored and editorially-independent news coverage. It sustained all sorts of calumny: from Arab accusations of being an agency for Zionism to American charges that it is a multipiece for suspected terrorists. It brought in an unprecedented international clout for its host country- Qatar. The tiny country's foreign ministry received more than 400 complaints and has been facing relentless diplomatic pressure. In occasions Libya, Tunisia and Morocco recalled their ambassa-

the person who personally took initiative to establish an ambitious station. Sandhurst educated Sheikh Hamad who threw his father in 1995, first demolished the country's information ministry and established the station by a decree and grant of \$150 million in February 1996. The rare opportunity came when the BBC Arabic News collapsed because of a quarrel over editorial control between the Saudi owners of Orbit satellite channel and the BBC. Al-Jazeera born from the ashes of that dissolved BBC Arabic News. Most of the original reporters, crews and anchors were hired by Al-Jazeera. In addition it brought together leading Arab journalists across the Arab countries who are not simply journalists but many of them also thinkers having in depth knowledge in world politics, history and religion. It left the traditional television programming set up of heavy local news, songs,

sex, controversial issues of religion and other countries affairs. 'Islam sells well' also came true for the channel. A leading Arab Islamic intellectual, Sheikh Yusuf al Karadawi's weekly show on Islamic issues and one of his debates with a secular intellectual so much enchanted the Arab audience that its video copies went on sale in Egypt and also available as far away as Indonesia and Malaysia.

To describe the channels' characteristic Fouad Ajami, a critic of Al-Jazeera and Professor of Middle East Studies at John Hopkins University, wrote in the New York Times Magazine: 'The programme (anti American talk show) paused for a commercial break. One ad offered a striking counterpoint to the furious anti Westernism of the call-in program. It was for Hugo Boss 'Deep Red' perfume. A wealthy Western woman in leather pants strode

the globe. It does not discuss Doha's relation with Israel with same enthusiasm it discuss other Arab countries relation with the regime. While the Al-Jazeera executives and Doha officials claim it is an independent, private sector channel, some critics arguing its dependency on Qatari government say that Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr al Thani, who is a cousin of the Qatari Emir, owns 35 percent of the channel and most of the members of the board of governors are related to royal family. Although some critics believe Al-Jazeera is a 'sophisticated media wing' of Qatari monarchy that can be used as needed, Qatari officials refute such allegations and liken their relationship with the channel to what the BBC enjoys with the British government. But Al-Jazeera's Washington bureau chief al-Mirazi subtly acknowledges the limit of freedom

with despotism, the Qatari station is doing much to usher in democratisation. Israeli leaders such as Binyamin Netanyahu have made much of this process being a prerequisite to dialogue with the Arab world. Al-Jazeera, it seems, has worked preemptively, bringing the interface first'. A third group of analysts believe after the bankruptcy of Arab nationalism through Saddam Hussein in the 90's the US did not like to see another Iranian style revolution or government. To maintain the status quo and keep US interest unharmed in the Middle East it needed to nurture so called democratisation and encourage to establish out lets of anger and frustration. Holders of this view mention US policy makers' appraisals. Kenton Keith, a former US ambassador to Qatar clarifies the US position, 'for the long-range importance of press freedom in the Middle East and the advantages that will ultimately have for the West you have to be a supporter of Al Jazeera, even if you have to hold your nose sometimes.'

Analysts view it positively or negatively, for academics, after the CNN phenomenon in the west, Al-Jazeera has appeared as another model and become a topic of research in media schools. One aspect has been clear that its success is a wake up call for the Arab world. Apart form old channels' emphasise on news and current affairs, new stations have entered in the competition. Saudi backed Middle East Broadcasting (MBC)'s news channel Al-Arabia which has been established in Dubai with a \$300 million investment, is now head to head with Al-Jazeera. Lebanese Broadcasting Company with partnership of London based pan Arab newspaper Al-Hayat injected million dollars to boost LBC's news coverage and is now rubbing shoulder with Al-Jazeera. Abu Dhabi television, Tehran based Al-Alam, London based Arab News Network (ANN), Hizbullah run Al-Manar all and in fierce battle to win Arab hearts and minds. The critical question is: with the wave of media boom in middle east- the countries that were once been major clients of western news imperialism have really started a 'contra flow'? If it really happens the most important lesson of Al-Jazeera would be historic: the global marketplace of news and information is no longer dominated by the United States or west.

Manzur Elahi is a broadcast journalist and Middle East analyst

**When its foes criticize al-Jazeera for sensationalism, being mouth piece of terrorist groups and inciting terrorist activities, its friends view it as a reliable and professional news channel, which tries to cover all sides of a story. Al-Jazeera's Washington bureau chief Hafiz al- Mirazi defends its position**

dors. Countries do not allow its reporters to enter. Saudi Arabia bars it from its territory except the annual pilgrimage of Haji. Last year the Jordanian authorities banned the station and withdrew its license, following a program considered as an insult to the Hashamite family and the role played by the Kingdom in Palestine and Iraq. Followed by it, Kuwait closed down the bureau of Al-Jazeera accusing its reporting of not being objective. It has also been banned from operating in Bahrain. The Bahraini Information Minister accused the station of being Zionist. 'We believe it (Al-Jazeera) is suspect and represents the Zionist side in the region. We will not deal with this channel because we object to its coverage of current affairs. It is a channel penetrated by Zionists.' In the latest incident the Iraqi governing council barred it for two weeks from covering official meetings because its coverage 'incite violence and encourages Saddam loyalists'. Although the Arab leaders dislike it, they can not cover up their curiosity. During a visit to Qatar, the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak went to Al-Jazeera and exclaimed : 'all this noise comes from this matchbox?!' The Syrian Information Minister grumbled 'the Emir's television station is bigger than his country'.

In fact the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Ale Thani was

some mainstream political debates, innocuous round-table discussions, popular soap operas, review of economic achievements or tourist attractions. It followed the broadcast industry's long run axiom 'content is king'. From the beginning in addition to its fast moving, video - heavy news casts, Al-Jazeera built an audience through its talk shows, which probe political, social, and religious issues previously untouched by Arab media. The questions Arab masses ask in private it did not hesitate put in the public: Why Arab regimes are dependant on the US? Why they maintain secret relation with Israel? Its talk shows are very popular and termed as 'boxing ring', where Arab intellectuals openly challenge each other on programmes like 'The Opposite Direction', 'Without Borders', 'The Other Opinion'. Through these programs Al-Jazeera broadcast sensational debates like who is a Jordanian, a taboo in Jordan where more than half the population is Palestinian. Opponents of Saudi and Egyptian rulers get chance to talk. Arab audiences across the globe can say whatever they like. An Egyptian can make phone call and urge Egyptians to topple 'hypocrite' regime of Mubarak. When Israeli officials appear and condemn suicide attacks, Hamas leaders appear and try to justify their attacks. It has broken the taboo of not talking about

toward a half -naked young man sprawled on bed. 'Your fragrance, your rules, Hugo Deep Red', the Arabic voiceover intoned. I imagined the young men in Arab-Muslim cities watching this. In the culture where the commercial was made, it was nothing unusual. But on those other shoes, this ad threw into the air insinuations about the liberties of the West-- the kind of liberties that can never be had by the thwarted youths of the Islamic World.' To criticise Al-Jazeera's 'cheap tactics' Egyptian press call its programs 'sinister salad of sex, religion and politics' spiced with 'sensationalist seasoning'.

When its foes criticize al-Jazeera for sensationalism, being mouth piece of terrorist groups and inciting terrorist activities, its friends view it as a reliable and professional news channel, which tries to cover all sides of a story. Al-Jazeera's Washington bureau chief Hafiz al- Mirazi defends its position. 'It covers the news from the Arab perspective, the same way that CNN covers the news from an American perspective.' To explain Al-Jazeera's success its chief editor Ibrahim Hilal says that unlike other stations it tries to give context and history with every news event. Many countries dislike Al-Jazeera 'because they hate transparency', says Hilal. But critics are unconvinced. They say it does not cover its own country with the same zeal it covers

the channel enjoys. Responding to question regarding its freedom from the monarchy he says, 'If you have a Rupert Murdoch, Turner, AOL Time Warner, General Motors, or Westinghouse, running the show, then you cannot exclude their interests.'

Al-Jazeera has now come under all out scrutiny by media analysts. Some believe the Emir of Qatar is an enlightened ruler who understood the long term benefits of democracy and openness. They cite evidences of his democratic reform in the country like holding elections, building institutions of accountability and transparency. Some refutes the conspiracy theory of some Arab zealots who think it as a part of a 'vast Zionist media conspiracy'; but they do not deny that much of its harvest go to the Israeli regime who did not have access to any Arab media outlet before Al-Jazeera's inception. They cite Israel's cooperative relation with the station and not criticising it for 'anti-Semitism', which Jewish Anti Defamation League (ADL) regularly does for media out lets around the world. Dr.Joshua Teitelbaum of The Moshe Dayan Centre of Middle East and African Studies suggests the possible reason behind positive attitude from the Israeli side. 'Whether or not its coverage is balanced, Al-Jazeera is still an important breakthrough for the Arab world, in that it offers a public forum for contact with Israel. In a region beset

## 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.

### The utility of Over-bridges

There are many over bridges in different towns and cities of the country. Over-bridges not only reduce traffic jam but also save valuable lives of pedestrians. But unfortunately, we are not aware of the right use of the over-bridges. Many people make the over-bridges

dirty by soiling them. Hawkers deal in various things intercepting the movement of pedestrians. In a word hawkers, beggars and addicts occupy the over-bridges all day and night. Moreover, many people do not use the over-bridges while crossing the streets. The traffic police or police sergeant on duty never stops them who cross the busy road running and risking their

life on the process. The authority concerned who built the over-bridges never look after them.

We all should bear in mind that over-bridges are our national assets and it is our duty to use them properly.

**AB M Barkat-e-Khuda**  
*Bhairab, Kishoregonj*  
**AL should join CPA**

### Conference

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference has been going on in Dhaka. Hitherto the main opposition party has remained quite reluctant about joining the conference, accusing the government responsible for this bizarre

situation. Maybe the government is responsible for not apprising the opposition party earlier enough, nonetheless, the Opposition, AL in particular, bears in mind that this is an international conference, and internal feuds must not dominate over the image of the country. We strongly believe the AL is a

democratic and patriotic party and so, it will not compromise the country's image with anything else. Once again, as the most devoted party of the country, the AL will prove its devotion.

**Amnul Islam**  
*4<sup>th</sup> Year, Economics, Dhaka University*  
**Poor governance**

Bangladesh has become the ultimate problem zone. The local marketing and production system is corrupt. The jute and gas sectors are facing problems due to short sighted management policies. Tourism is facing the problems because of the infrastructure. And we probably cannot think about any sector that has no problem.

It seems that the entire society is infected with some degenerating disease. First the eaten up the base, and now it is slowly creeping upwards. And the conscious citizens are ignoring the whole situation or have simply resigned.

**A Mawar**  
*Dhaka*