

Help the Kurds

It is now apparent that the Turkish army, backed by air power, is involved in a major operation against Kurdish rebels deep inside Iraqi territory.

Ankara is claiming that the cross-border raids are not aimed at Iraqi sovereignty, and therefore not an act of aggression. Turkey does have a file with which to cover what, in anybody else's book, would be a flagrant violation of all norms of international behaviour.

The current situation, however, is nothing remotely like what the leaders of the two countries might have envisaged at the time.

The United States and other Western powers committed troops into northern Iraq not so long ago to protect Kurdish Iraqis facing annihilation at the hands of Saddam Hussein's mauled but far from finished army.

Ankara's military actions have suddenly brought to the surface the fact that Kurds are fighting for freedom not only in Iraq, but in Turkey as well.

The question now arises is, how is it possible that Turkey is able to unleash its military might on its Kurdish rebels taking sanctuary in an area supposedly under UN protection?

By bombing Kurdish refugees, Turkey has shown a totally unacceptable disregard for the UN presence in the area.

Even if we accept that Turkey has some legal backing for crossing the Iraqi border, on the basis of the 1984 pact, that still leaves the question of the UN's role in the area unexplained.

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More Hurting than Jamuna Devastations

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The Pabna fabric, specially the coarse saree is the mainstay of the total textile needs — and not one or two textile mills, however big.

Weaving is as old and as basic to human society. This continues to be so with all modern societies — the poorer societies making the best of it by using it as a main employment-generating and labour-absorbing agency.

The weaver's continued debacle is a measure of the ruling class's alienation not only from the toiling masses but also from the history and culture of the land.

Most Governments in Third World countries are far too 'ban'-happy. They ban import of books, magazines, often in what they consider the best interest of the people.

Maximizing Growth of the Rice Economy

RICE is what we eat and what we grow. The economy is overwhelmingly dominated by rice.

The growth of the rice economy is therefore fundamental in our march from LDC to NIC. According to soil survey information, approximately 3.6 million hectares of land were potentially suitable for cultivation of high yielding varieties (HYV) of Aus and Aman paddy under rainfed conditions in the Kharif season.

Even in the project areas such as Ganges-Kobadak and DND near Dhaka, not more than 50 to 70 per cent of the areas was under HYV during Kharif season.

The expanding area under rice has been contributed by Boro rice cultivation on land which would be put to a complex rainfed double or triple cropping pattern involving broadcast Aus, broadcast Aman, and a range of Rabi crops like pulses, oilseeds, wheat, potato, sweet potatoes, chillies etc.

Rice is of overwhelming importance. The major source of its growth has been irrigated boro rice at the cost of a varieties of other crops including rice from other seasons.

It is not possible because the best farmer is the owner-operator, retaining the value of his hard labour; while the average farmer is a Bargadar or owner-cum-tenant who must pay half the produce to the land owner.

Wheat showed a downward trend. The strategy of growth for rice should therefore be to concentrate on HYV Aus and HYV Aman crops so that the diversified cropping pattern during the Rabi season can be retained.

The accelerated HYV Aus and Aman production should be the future strategy to maximize the growth of cereal production. The high potential 3.6 million hectares should be the focus of attention where paddy production can be maximized without irrigation.

From LDC to NIC by Shahed Latif

area out of the net cropped area of 3.6 million hectares, can produce 24 million tons of paddy. With the removal of agrarian constraints, it should be possible to organize around three million, one to two hectare consolidated long-term lease holdings where given the supporting infrastructure (but without irrigation), credit, inputs and services, the projected yield must not be difficult to achieve within a five-year period.

Another important aspect of the growth maximization strategy for the rice economy would be that in the past activities vital for paddy cultivation — inputs, credit and extension

narrowing the supply gap in edible oil through rice bran oil production and at the same time, obtaining high protein deoiled cake as excellent poultry feed. In fact paddy can be the basis for integrated paddy processing and by-product utilization complex which should attract the attention of the rural elite receiving investment compensation funds and/or assets for surrendering their lands, as proposed in my earlier agrarian reform proposals.

By-product Utilization

The proposed 24 million tons of paddy if channelled through integrated processing and by-product utilization complex can be decomposed into (i) 1.2 million tons of paddy (5% of total paddy) as seed, feed and waste; (ii) out of the balance, modern processing enabling 70 per cent recovery would yield 15.96 mil-

lion tons of white rice; (iii) the 1.6 million tons of rice bran can be further processed into 287,000 tons of edible oil and 1.7 million tons of poultry feed where deoiled bran cake is 80 per cent of the feed content.

According to preliminary estimates, the 3.6 million hectares as planned under intensive Aus-Aman cropping system should give rise to around 400 such agro-processing complexes each with a fairly large capacity for processing 20 tons/hour of paddy, 10 tons/hour of poultry feed, brick field, cement kiln, hatchery, slaughter house, fish farm etc. In addition, 25 solvent extraction plants with capacity of 20 to 40 tons per day of edible oil will be required.

Opportunities for investment in packaging materials for edible oil, rice and feed, straw boards would also appear. Most significant induced opportunity would be the prospect for investment in capital goods industries; for example, rice milling machineries through an overlapping second round

Rice is what we eat and paddy is what we produce. But in order to maximize the growth of the rice economy not only edible rice, but a variety of other products should be processed from paddy, intensifying product processing as well as product use is the golden strategy for the uphill march from LDC to NIC.

Europe Runs Scared of Refugee Floods

Petar Hadji-Ristic writes from Brussels

Political refugees are finding they are increasingly less welcome in Europe. As jobs become more scarce, the European definition of a refugee becomes more strict. Many believe the solution is to stop supporting regimes which cause people to leave their own countries.

Europe's refugees. In Western Europe, the number of asylum-seekers continued its increase in 1990, reaching 425,000, as compared to 320,000 in 1989 and 290,000 in 1988. Substantial numbers came from outside the region: Sri Lanka: 17,869; Romania: 61,261; Turkey: 46,309; Yugoslavia: 32,023; Lebanon: 28,295; Iran: 16,497; Poland: 13,771; Zaire: 11,215; India: 11,208; Somalia: 10,444. Major new refugee flows in Europe were: from Albania to Greece (19,852 of whom 6,700 repatriated from November 1990 - March 1991), to Italy (27,000 of whom 2,000 had returned by March 1991), to Yugoslavia (2,100) and from Iraq to Turkey.

seems, that brings refugees to Europe: panic. "Europe is scared to death," commented Jan Nielsson, who attended the seminar for the Churches' Committee for Migrants in Europe.

Seventeen million people are now on the run in Africa, most of them fleeing internal disorder. Five million of these qualify for refugee status because they have crossed borders to escape persecution. The UNHCR Commissioner would like a special category of "temporary protected status" to include all those who cannot claim protection under the convention but are now fleeing for their lives.

The spectre of massive immigration from Eastern Europe is also causing alarm. Already young Poles are seen throughout Western Europe seeking work as their country makes the difficult transition to a market economy.

Some experts are predicting 50 million Russians will be put out of work if the USSR radically reforms its economy, possibly double this figure if the reform programme fails. No border controls would be sufficient to stop them.

Britain's John Major expressed these concerns at a European summit in Luxembourg when he called for an urgent clampdown on immigration and expressed concern about the number of asylum applications.

Liberals charge that in face of the challenges Europe is withdrawing into a fortress. It is shown to the south of Cochín, whereas it is situated actually to the north. This I know because I am a Keralite, now a citizen of Bangladesh, and have lived in Cochín for the first 11 years of my life.

To the Editor...

Individual's right

Sir, I heard from my friendly neighbourhood drugstore just the other day that calcium lactate tablets may soon be banned, or perhaps already have been, by the government.

My first reaction was a flash of sheer anger: what right has the government to infringe my right to take calcium lactate tablets if I think, that they are good for me? After I had regained some degree of tranquillity, I reflected more calmly on the legitimate boundaries of state power over the individual. These are my conclusions.

100% literacy in Kerala

Sir, I have the pleasure to express my appreciation of the article on the above subject published in your esteemed journal on July 13. But I find a blunder committed as evidenced in the map of Kerala published along with the article.

In the said map, Ernakulam is shown to the south of Cochín, whereas it is situated actually to the north. This I know because I am a Keralite, now a citizen of Bangladesh, and have lived in Cochín for the first 11 years of my life.

OPINION Traffic Policing

Dhaka's Traffic Police deserve a pat for displaying patience and forbearance in the Herculean task of controlling traffic in an area which can handle only one-tenth of the number of vehicles plying today; and where the majority of the drivers are illiterate and untrained, and many have no driving license.

Large teams of TP are seen on duty at intersections (with or without traffic lights). This waste of trained manpower has to be temporarily tolerated due to the vicious habit of indiscipline of the impatient drivers, who are bred on the traditional Bengali attitude of defiance to authority, for centuries, as history bears witness.

So long the number of vehicles cannot be reduced, (the number of unauthorized rickshaws can be reduced if the political parties do not protest), the only option available is to be ruthlessly strict. As a regular traveller on the Mirpur Road between Asad Gate and New Market, several examples are cited below for remedial action.

Control can be divided into two broad areas: of the stationary vehicles, and of the vehicles in motion. The TP are not paying much attention to parking and halting. There are two main culprits, the rickshaws and the bus drivers.

At the bus stops, the buses do not halt at the edge of the road. With more than one bus, there is 'double' halting (like double parking) blocking half the road, and flow of traffic in one direction is impeded, forcing the vehicles behind to divert to the opposite lane of oncoming traffic. Buses must be made to halt in single file, and not abreast.