

Lessons from an Ordinance that wasn't

It was a lesson in democracy and humility, par excellence. Democracy, because the political set back that the ruling party brought upon itself was solely caused by violation of democratic norms.

The promulgation of the Ordinance relating to the presidential election, and its repeal within a few days, revealed as nothing did before, the lack of democratic culture among our political parties and among those who lead them.

As BNP's promulgation of the Ordinance was a blunder, its decision to repeal it was courageous. In our chequered and eventful political history ('eventful' is to be read only as full of events, not also as full of meaning and experience.)

This brings us to the question, what sort of a mistake was it? Was it a serious violation of 'letter and spirit' of the democratic norms, or was it one which, as the government Press Note says, "the opponents of democratic forces... are trying to confuse the people" with?

The most important lesson to be learnt from this unsavory affair is that democracy, which we are in the process of instituting at the national level, must be introduced inside the political parties themselves.

If BNP had followed its own party norms in selecting their presidential nominee, then it needn't have been fearful of its own MPs voting any other way. That would have automatically eliminated the need for this short-lived Ordinance.

The total decision making process within each party must cease to rest either in the hands of a single person, or restricted within a favourite few. Parties will have groups, the hangers-on and the trusted. They will also have those who dissent and ask the uncomfortable questions, but all because they love the party. It is in the capacity to incorporate all, integrate as much of the divergences and involve as big a group as is possible in the decision making process, that will determine the growth and dynamism of a political party in a democratic system.

What's in a Name

What's in a name? But there is indeed much more in a name than strikes the ear. Specially important is the question of who has made the naming. Call a rose a periwinkle it would only sound sweeter but you never, for that matter, take it upon you to christen the Biman's executive class as Rajanigandha if you happen to be Lt. Gen(Rtd) HM Ershad.

This may very well be a case of poetic justice. Ershad renamed Sutiakhali, his wife's ancestral home is there, as Umedbari after his father-in-law's name. He must have been influenced in this by his illustrious 'predecessor-in-law' Mr Monem Khan who, as the best defender of the faith since Henry VIII, changed the names of a number of heathen-named Mymensingh railway stations.

General Ershad, at the time he used to call all the tunes, enjoined upon us to spell Dacca as Dhaka and to use the Bengali calendar as reformed by the Bangla Academy. We are continuing with both.

Biman's reported decision only helps underline the person it wants us to be sterilized against contamination, while we would rather not join in the madness how about having a swing at possible substitutes? — Champak is both Bengali and English and is good if a little trite by now which is also the case of Chameli — already used once too many. Kumud is a better name for our national flower which seems to sound all right for a substitute.

US Finds itself on Trial with Noriega

Mohamed Hamaludin writes from Miami

At least 1,000 Panamanian citizens were estimated killed when United States forces invaded in 1990. The prize for the US was the capture of military ruler General Manuel Noriega, who was taken to Miami to face drug smuggling charges.

Geneva Convention on prisoners of war, to try Noriega. Defence attorneys argued that under the convention a prisoner of war must be tried by a tribunal in a third country. The



MANUEL NORIEGA Embarrassing connections

judge denied the request.

As the case opened, it became clear that the prosecution would have difficulty finding 12 men and women who would be impartial jurors. One reason is the massive publicity that surrounded the invasion in December 1989 and the capture and removal of Noriega to Miami.

This was not the first time that a Castro link and been made to Noriega, but some potential jurors made it clear they could not be impartial. Castro is not exactly a hero among the 600,000 or so Cuban exiles who live in Miami.

respond, 400 were returned as undeliverable, and 70 people were excused.

Noriega could face jail sentences of up to 145 years and \$1.1 million in fines if the charges against him stick.

The 12-count indictment was made by a federal grand jury in Miami on February 4, 1988. Noriega ignored it and obviously had no intention of voluntarily going to Miami to face trial.

Originally, he was charged along with 15 alleged co-conspirators. By the time the trial opened, six had agreed to cooperate with the prosecution in exchange for light sentences and, in some cases, cash.

Some are awaiting trial, one is dead, others are fugitives, while Pablo Escobar Gaviria, head of the Medellin drug cartel, recently turned himself in to the Colombian authorities.

The trial had originally been set to start on March 5, 1990, but was postponed to January 28 this year and then delayed

again to September. The delay came about after pre-trial hearings on the defence request for secret government documents it alleges show Noriega was in fact working for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The defence says Noriega worked for the CIA for many years and that US President George Bush was aware of this when he was director of the CIA and later vice-president under Ronald Reagan. Bush has denied these claims.

On the second day of the trial the judge ordered the government to provide any evidence it had regarding Noriega helping a supposed CIA plot that included drug dealing to help finance the Nicaraguan Contras — at a time when official funding was prohibited by the US Congress.

The judge's request came as a major blow to the prosecution and government efforts to keep such material confidential. Judge Hoeverler wrote: "Information which shows that

persons identified as Noriega's associates in criminal activity were employed by the CIA would, at the very least, tend to support Noriega's defence that the activities with which he is charged were part of an operation run by the United States."

The US government has not wholly denied and official relationship with Noriega. The administration admitted that he was paid more than \$320,000 as a CIA and US Army informant.

However, the government insists that the Panamanian strongman was so mixed up in drugs that it warranted the harsh action taken to capture him — which, according to some sources, claimed at least 1,000 Panamanian civilian lives.

Some said Bush was seeking to bolster his political fortunes by ordering the invasion of Panama, in the same way that his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, did with the invasion of Grenada.

But it could be that, in capturing and bringing the four-star Panamanian military leader to the US for trial, the administration has opened up a can of worms it would have preferred to keep tightly shut.

MOHAMED HAMALUDIN is a Guyanese journalist who is now managing editor of the Miami Times.

Thoughts on Remedy for Unemployment

by Golam Ashraf

STARTING with the Seventies, unemployment has become the diverse effect of the policy framers and decision makers of the government of all the member countries of the United Nations.

Let us scrutinize, what is employment and the term unemployment. Employment is the occupation of a person who renders efforts toward productions, operation or in maintaining socio-economic and political system in exchange of salary, wage or benefit whatsoever for his/her sustenance.

Let us discuss how a human being, male or female, functions, through employment and unemployment processes. First, there is usually a routine for spending twenty four hours by an employed person. The day starts with waking up from the bed followed by prayer, morning walk, jogging, physical exercises etc., then writing letters or going through newspapers, working files etc.

The most important lesson to be learnt from this unsavory affair is that democracy, which we are in the process of instituting at the national level, must be introduced inside the political parties themselves.

If BNP had followed its own party norms in selecting their presidential nominee, then it needn't have been fearful of its own MPs voting any other way. That would have automatically eliminated the need for this short-lived Ordinance.

The total decision making process within each party must cease to rest either in the hands of a single person, or restricted within a favourite few. Parties will have groups, the hangers-on and the trusted. They will also have those who dissent and ask the uncomfortable questions, but all because they love the party. It is in the capacity to incorporate all, integrate as much of the divergences and involve as big a group as is possible in the decision making process, that will determine the growth and dynamism of a political party in a democratic system.

entailed. Next there is a break for mid day meal which we term as lunch. The work pursued after the mid day meal is usually slower but steady, because the concentration is peak at such hours. The business communications are concluded in these hours and so are the final touching of the day are performed in the field and factories. Then, usually after eight hours of work the returning to home takes place.

The people of colder nations usually lack bath after return from the work. The social activities starts for many, outside their homes in visiting civic halls, malls amusement parks, clubs, etc. Many remain at home to look after their family and pursue gardening, assist family members with tutoring, cooking, cleaning or repair of household equipment followed by dinner or supper taken before going to bed. There are also works at night, like newspaper industry, shifts for some educational institutions, mills and factories in order to cope with the rising demand.

The Unemployed

The unemployed person is the human being who pursues many of the activities outlined above, but his or her activities are not taken into account, for financial consideration, by the society and the government.

If we go through the esteemed dailies regularly, we would find a report quite often published; it is the rate of the unemployed both at home and

abroad. What is really meant by unemployment? Is it starvation, sickness, pennilessness, shelterlessness, monotony, inability or lack of drive and initiative?

Unemployment, usually refers to the non-earning member of the public. This non-earning is due to non-income or receipt of narrow money (M1). Suppose, a heir of a millionaire who is unemployed and inherits broad money (M2) by means of time deposits or liquid assets, should we define him or her as employed? Therefore, when an individual does not willfully, or have no ability or favourable environment to, exert physical or mental activities or combination of both, for a reasonable career, such phenomenon is termed as unemployment, and that may surface within a home, society and nation.

The income of narrow money (M1) is affected with transactions. But if we closely observe, it is the initiative and the liberty acting at the top for concluding transactions and in many cases the present day transaction yield negative results i.e., for unforeseen future, the limited money being drained away. At individual level, it is the over-trading and arms race at the national level. Fair competitions are welcomed by many, but we often forget that resource is limited and through agricultural, commercial, industrial race for markets of the masses; many machines, large amount of creditors' money, valuable

working hours, essential public utilities, raw materials are wasted due to unfair competition, and needlessly further aggravate the green house effect.

The System

Therefore, from the above trend we can draw a conclusion that human beings are indispensable. It is not the limited number of desks with tiller or space before a machine or the driver's seat of a craft that is causing shortage of employment. It is the vicious system wherein all the nations of the world have plunged into, the aftermath of industrial revolution.

These days, barter standard is virtually absent at individual level and also coming to an end for the hard line nations at international level. In this context, let us stress on the valued opinions of two famous US economists: Paul A. Samuelson expressed that, government of nation should direct the consumer spendings while Milton Friedman felt that markets should be uncontrolled — the government's main function is to keep them open and monitor the amount of money in circulation. Now both the views are correct to an extent and one more substance may be added there to that, when the Government is the lone issuer and guarantor of M1 to its own and international community therefore, government of any nation cannot avoid the responsibility for its monitor-

ing and regulation so that velocity of circulation of money is maintained at the optimum level for ensuring employment and proper growth of economy. It is evident that money is naturally liable for stagnation due to human instincts, thereby the government's duty would be to make the expansion and contraction of money circulation according to the ratio of new potential consumers i.e. the unemployed, because the treasury money, whatever is the amount, is more honourable than the money received through charity, theft, social vices or extortions.

The government of a nation also reserves the rights for increasing and decreasing the flow of goods to the markets. Say, there may be natural calamity or social upheaval hampering domestic productions, therefore, Government should arrange for import of goods to meet the shortages. When there is surplus in production then government should further increase employment, the supply of M1, and ethically, encourage exporting of excess local product to nations where it has demand.

Flow of Money

It happened in India, once the inflation was running very high and the well to do Indians with M1 were instructed by the government to burn a higher denomination bill every day in the morning, till the prices of essential commodities stabilised in the country.

In Islam, it is compulsory

for every Muslim to give away without any obligation, two and half percent of the total savings over the year which instantly curtails inflation.

In economic terms, it reflects that velocity and expansion of money should increase with the growth of population.

Broad money (M2) are deposits, and legal money, therefore government is legally liable to imbibe the individuals and organizations with large deposits, to recruit more number of employees instead of further industrial investments because world wide expansion of industrial revolution and the present application of hi-tech in the line of production have made the business world more competitive and for last time century, only few countable nations in the west and an eastern country repeatedly proved that they are capable to supply agricultural and industrial products at mass scale, to meet the demands of the remaining nations.

From the above example, we can come to a conclusion that when the world at present is equipped with monitoring satellites, speedy transport systems, super computers, there is no need for bewilderment but to grasp the changing pattern of human needs and to act quickly and efficiently to the back logging of unemployment with joint efforts of the prominent individuals and government of every member nation of the United Nations, to initiate remedy for unemployment.

South-East Asia

Soviet Crisis Revives Security Fears

FOR South-east Asia, until recently a violent battle-ground between communist and non-communist forces, the short-lived coup against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has spawned a fresh bout of jitters about security in the region.

US plans to reduce its military presence in the region in favour of stronger Japanese influence is being reassessed by the non-communist Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the light of positive reactions of Vietnam, China and North Korea to the brief dominance of the hardliners in Moscow.

ASEAN — comprising the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei — was formed in 1967 during the Vietnam War in response to what was seen as a communist drift in Indochina as well as the attempts of

communist China and North Korea to extend their influence in the region.

Local communist underground organisations have long been a security problem in ASEAN countries. It was only in 1989 that communist rebels in Malaysia laid down their arms. The Philippines still faces a strong threat from communist guerrillas.

Diplomats in the Malaysian capital said although Gorbachev has been reinstated, the effects of the coup on East and South-east Asia are likely to remain for some time.

They cited these effects as including a stronger resistance

to reform among socialist governments, the re-emergence of a socialist community linking China, Vietnam and North Korea, Moscow's possible rethinking of its plan to reduce its military presence in the region and an attempt to impose a communist solution to the Cambodia conflict in place of the UN-crafted one.

The failed coup has also raised security fears in South-east Asia where the easing of US-Soviet tensions during the Gorbachev era weakened the threads of US defence-based alliances.

The Philippines and Thailand have for decades come directly under US mili-

tary protection. Malaysia and Singapore have security umbrella in the form of the Five Power Defence Arrangement whose other three partners are Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

This cover will soon be extended to Brunei, leaving Indonesia as the only nation that is truly non-aligned in military terms.

In the Philippines, the United States has served notice that it would be vacating Clark Airbase and leasing the Subic Naval Base for another 10 years.

But a new bases treaty is facing strong opposition in the Philippine Senate and US officials are using the Soviet crisis to drive home the necessity for the maintenance of US military presence in the Philippines.

ASEAN states have in recent years been working on reducing this foreign military presence and have toyed with the concept of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality (Zopfan).

But while publicly deploring the risk from the presence of foreign forces, ASEAN officials privately worry that the departure of the superpowers as regional guarantors of security might open them to the bigger threat posed by regional powers with hegemonic ambitions, meaning India, Japan and China.

Aside from regional threats, the risk of conflict also stems from rivalries among the ASEAN member states. Attempts to lay the groundwork for an indigenous defence system by staging bilateral military exercises

have been difficult.

For instance, joint Malaysian-Indonesian exercises carried out in the southern part of Malaysia early August angered Singapore.

The city state did not like its two neighbours holding manoeuvres just miles away on its national day and mobilised its own reserve troops in retaliation.

Japan recently proposed that the annual meeting of ASEAN with its dialogue partners of industrialised countries be turned into a forum to discuss regional security issues with a permanent secretariat.

The United States gave the proposal its support in the light of its plan to reshape its security relationships in the region and pull out more than 15,000 troops by December 1992. But the ASEAN countries rejected it.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said a probable ASEAN strategy will be to embark on selective confidence-building measures, including the introduction of greater transparency in the region's military arrangements and the expansion of bilateral alliances into multi-lateral ones.

Malaysian defence minister Najib Razak said even a gradual withdrawal of US forces from South-east Asia 'makes it necessary for us to stand on our own feet in terms of defence capability, at least to meet any kind of low or medium threat.'

In the wake of the re-emergence of security concerns in the region following the abortive coup in Moscow, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad blamed the West for not giving Gorbachev the assistance he needed.

To the Editor...

Children

Sir, This has reference to the letter of Mr. Cole P. Dodge published in your esteemed daily on Sept 27 and also to Ms. R. Costa's opinion of the same date.

I heartily congratulate and thank them both for their writings on the humanitarian aspects especially of the children.

Children are angels and should be treated as such but in reality quite opposite is happening. For the sake of food or for anything of necessity they are lured to work and then treated inhumanly with utter injustice. Who is going to supervise their plight and working conditions — practically none except God Himself.

While writing in newspaper might just be an initiation

among a series and lot of other things or actions to be taken in this regard, it is unfortunate that no subsequent actions are taken ultimately thereby ending the matter just in place where it got started, effecting no solution to the problems we are dipped in.

More rigid and stiff actions are the need of the hour. The concerned authorities are required to implement the rights and privileges set forth by the UNICEF and ILO conventions/charter, for we often flout these sanctions on various flimsy grounds.

People who make money out of the agony and sufferings of human beings especially the young children, are not human beings but only money makers. They are out to derive cheap labour from hapless children for generating their income, in this least developed country

where the 5% affluent rule the remaining 95% poverty stricken population.

Aruar Ul Mohsin Jigatala, Dhaka

Traffic at city-centre

Sir, It's an indescribable situation. With buses and rickshaws parked in the middle of the roads or crossroads, and at most times in file occupying the whole breadth of the road allowing little let out for any other vehicle, it is the busiest city centre what they call 'Gulistan' — after the name of a cinema house that came up in the area when the city, as the (provincial) capital of the then East Pakistan, was first implementing its plans in the early fifties.

However, I have nothing to say about what name they give

the place. Albeit it takes you to recall what Dhaka was four decades back and what it is now — with population and traffic increasing five-fold but measures (system, facility) to cope with taken little.

Moreover, it is inaction and indifference on the part of those responsible that make things worse. I have seen hardly a policeman taking the lawbreaker (traffic rules — 'buswallahs' blocking the thoroughfare at will, or the standing 'rickshawallahs' never allowing a straight entry from Bangabandhu Avenue into Nawabpur Road) into book. We hear about 'traffic weeks' often and we have heard about 'plans to ease.....' but nothing has worked as yet. How long the paying public should suffer?

Manik Choudhury Wari, Dhaka.