

Crisis in Pakistan

The threat by Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, made at a country's independence day rally in Lahore on Thursday, to "destroy" the opposition Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of Benazir Bhutto was hardly a rhetorical outburst. It reflected the mood of intense confrontation that has set in right across the political spectrum of the whole country as well as the growing frustration of the Pakistani leader with the divisive forces which have been let loose from all different directions. For the 10-month old government of the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA), problems are just a little too serious to be resolved by the destruction of PPP.

True, many of the problems facing Mr Sharif are left-overs from previous administrations, especially from the government of Ms Bhutto. However, during the past few months, many of these inherited problems have grown more acute while new ones have been added to the list of challenges for Mr Sharif.

Law and order situation, showing a marked deterioration, continues to be the main headache for Islamabad. During the 20-month PPP rule, violence was mainly confined to the province of Sindh and Karachi. But from June onwards, the situation started becoming serious in Punjab, the home province of the Prime Minister and the main political constituency of anyone who wants to be in power in Pakistan. Then, the cancellation of Mr Sharif's scheduled visit to Japan in early July, citing the violence in Punjab as a reason, caused a gaping hole in the public confidence in the IDA administration.

On the face of it, the Government is perhaps left with little choice but to introduce tough laws to deal with the surge in crime. However, with Ms Bhutto condemning the legislation as "black laws", the opposition groupings and dissidents inside the ruling party have found a new rallying cry against the government, amidst talks that Mr Sharif's days in office are numbered.

The opposition groups which have threatened to resign from the parliament en bloc to force an election, may still find it tough to oust Mr Sharif that easily. Here, much depends on how the Pakistani leader sorts out his problems, again inherited from the past, with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan — and the army.

Analysts in Islamabad suggest that Mr Sharif, like his predecessor Ms Bhutto, ran into problems when he sought to exercise his full authority as the Prime Minister, thus disregarding the powers enjoyed by the President under the country's constitution. For Mr Sharif, the role played by General Mirza Aslam Beg who has just retired as the Chief of Staff of the armed forces added a new complication to a volatile situation. A man with high profile and undoubted political ambitions, Gen. Beg can make any number of moves to destabilise the IDA administration. He could make a bid to replace Mr Sharif as Prime Minister or he might take over the job of Ishaq Khan, the ageing President, and run the country very much like the late Ziaul Haq.

It will be a disaster for the fragile democracy in Pakistan if Mr Sharif cannot set his own house in order — in order and find new allies among the democratic forces in the country. The Prime Minister may well be perfectly serious in his threat to "destroy" PPP. But in the long run, he may realise that unless all political parties work together to protect a democratically elected civilian government in the country, even, if possible, through the setting-up of a broad-based national coalition government at the centre, the country may again drift into military rule, of one form or another.

Traffic Rules and Police

One person died in Dhaka city everyday, on an average, during the past 30 days in road accidents; there is one sergeant available at any given time to oversee traffic in every 10-square-mile area of the city; nearly 400,000 rickshaws ply in this city which can probably accommodate at best 100,000 of them; less than 900 constables are currently available to man 240 traffic points, as against a minimum requirement of 3,500.

Armed with these statistics and more, Dhaka Metropolitan Police swings into yet another three-day traffic campaign from tomorrow. The campaign is designed to make vehicle-users and pedestrians more aware (or less ignorant) about traffic rules. While these campaigns are a worthwhile exercise, they have also proved to be rather less than effective. This year's campaign is likely to produce the same negative results unless the police are prepared to take a hard look themselves first.

Lack of sufficient manpower has now become a critical problem, particularly as the volume of traffic in the city increases by the day. That is a problem the ministry of home affairs will have to tackle over a period of time. However, something needs to be done immediately in order to make serving officers and men more efficient in their job.

Judging by the amount of traffic offences motorists get away with regularly, it seems traffic policemen on duty are either not bothered by them, or are simply unaware of what ought to be done. How often do we see a bus loading or unloading passengers at street corners or other undesignated places, causing wholly unnecessary traffic jams? All the time, we should say. How often do we see vehicles parked on pedestrian crossings at traffic lights, with traffic policeman on the spot seemingly unperturbed? Far too often. Incidences of buses, tempos and rickshaws parking two or three abreast, taking up half or more of the road space and thereby causing serious jams, are everyday occurrences. Traffic policemen are always present at these points, but hardly any action is ever taken. Is it because the men are unaware of the rules? Or is it because they are afraid to impose them? Either way, these are problems the police ought to tackle as a matter of urgency.

The behaviour of some traffic policemen also leaves a lot to be desired. Cases of policemen striking people, particularly poor rickshaw-paddlers, are all too common in Dhaka. But that cannot be acceptable. The police has no right whatsoever to assault another person for minor traffic infringements (or any other offence, for that matter). There are monetary and other punishments prescribed by law. Furthermore, physical assault, as well as being an offence, is an affront to man's dignity. The police must learn to respect citizens.

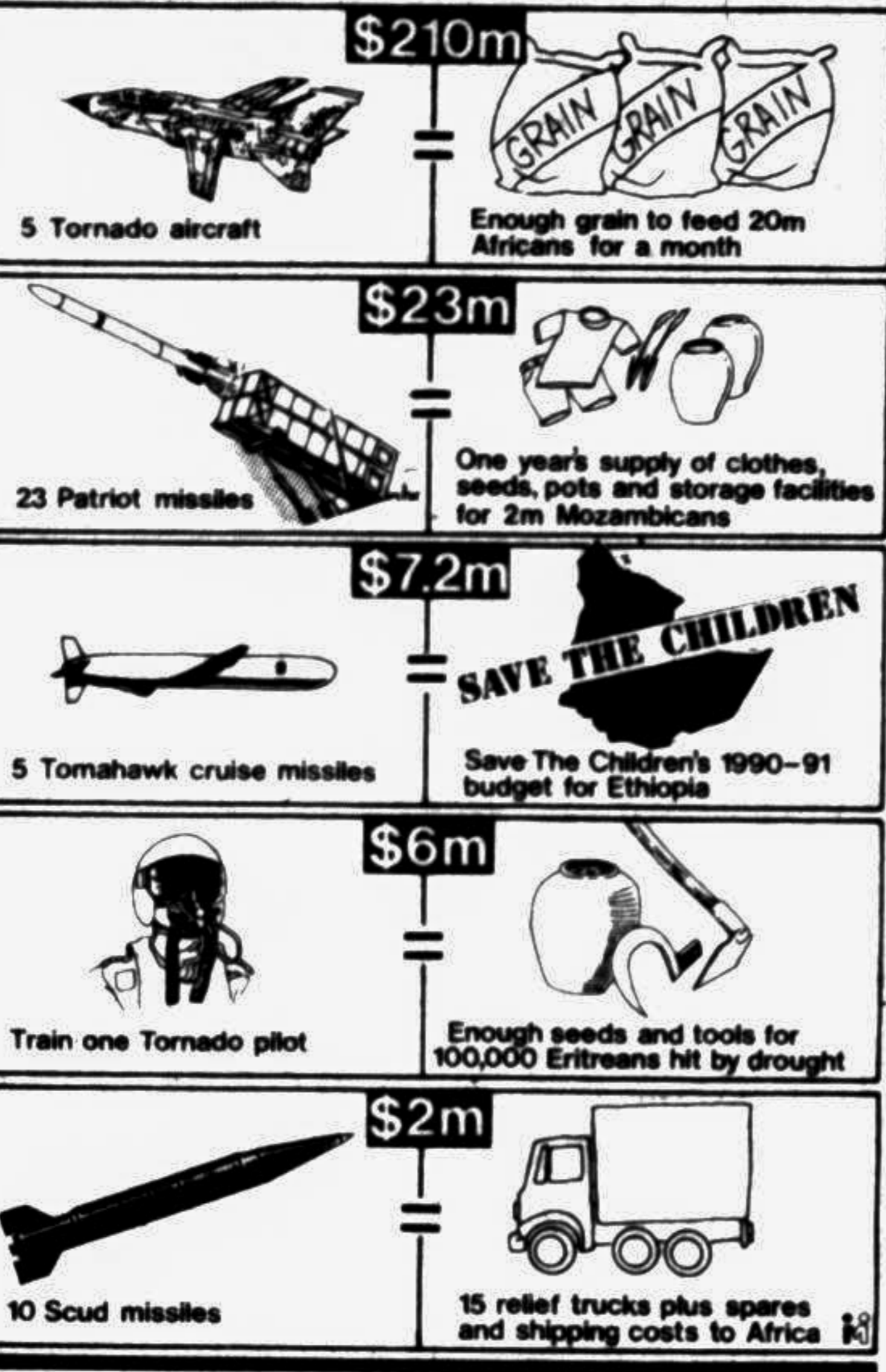
A Year Later, Where is the New World Order?

Gillian Forrester writes from London

Those who opposed the war against Saddam Hussein are reminding the world that anything accomplished by it is now overshadowed by the glare of unfulfilled opportunities. With the feverish media coverage just a memory, the thoughts of international observers — anti-war ideas that did not get so much space in the predominantly pro-war media of the west — are being published. A book just released in London asks aloud: "So where is the new world order?"

The cost of war

How hardware used in the Gulf swallowed up the dollars



set by the war, said Gittings, is the idea that sanctions are a totally ineffective tool against aggression and that peaceful methods of resolving conflict do not work.

Added Tim Niblock, a British academic who contributed to the book: "There is every likelihood that the way the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was dealt with creates a pattern of behaviour that may now be followed in all such cases."

Said Gittings: "There is an urgent need for reform of the UN and the Security Council to make sure it isn't hijacked again." But to date, such reforms are not in anyone's plans.

And while forcing arms restraint in Iraq and in the Soviet Union, the US and UN are now helping to build the weapons arsenals of the "friendly" Arab states and Israel, Gittings said — all in the name of checking aggression.

Arms sales to the Middle East by the US, already a staggering \$8.7 billion in 1987 soared to \$13.9 billion in 1990 and are projected to reach \$15 billion by the end of 1991.

"The arms race has resumed," Gittings said.

Bush may be "laying down the law," on democratisation in the Soviet Union, but the same has not been done in the "semi-feudal" regimes of the Gulf, Gittings added. The nature of the regimes contributed to the abnormal politics that produced an abnormal

leader like Saddam Hussein." The continuing hardship of the Palestinians, now effectively frozen out of the made-to-new-world-order Middle East peace conference, changed little despite the cataclysmic events in the Gulf.

Said Palestinian academic Yezid Sayigh, another contributor to the book: "So much has changed and so little has changed. There may be the appearance of great movement but it is difficult to tell."

Sayigh said the continued problems of the Palestinians disprove any claim that there is a new world order in which injustice and aggression are no longer tolerated.

Sayigh said the Palestinians are living as prisoners in the occupied territories, unable to carry out daily activities like getting to work, going to market or tending their crops without harassment and restriction. And he decried the rapid increase in settlements by Israelis in the occupied territories, a clear breach of international law.

Sayigh also criticised Western reaction to the plight of the Kurds: "Not a single Western government was able to stand up on the Kurdish issue, the West is not willing to make that sort of stand."

Before the Gulf War, there were clear signs that Middle Eastern countries had begun to develop the technology needed for greater independence. Now Iraqi and Kuwaiti technological

capabilities are destroyed and Saudi Arabia and Jordan are severely crippled.

Beyond the physical destruction, there is an enormous gap in skill and knowledge left by workers who fled the region. In the acrimonious aftermath of a war that saw Arab states lining up on different sides, exchange of expertise is more difficult, putting on hold the dreams of regional co-operation and development without Western aid. Add to that the shortfall in Western aid now being experienced by some countries that did not support the coalition, Sudan, Jordan and Tunisia for example.

All this is nothing new. On the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas, it is easy to see the continuation of history, said Ramphal. During the centuries of European colonialism the prospect of riches and wealth took priority over human rights. Half a millennium later, we are still fighting over commodities.

Ramphal added: "But for oil, Kuwait would have remained yet another unsuspecting victim of temptation." It was oil that tempted Saddam Hussein and the need for secure access to oil supplies that lured the US into the war. "War aims of the West had little to do with aggression against Kuwait," he said.

And the aftermath? "Despite the spirit of triumphalism in some quarters, the crisis has been anything but a glorious experience." It helped to confirm there is a need for a new world order, but a new order, not an old order with a new name, not a Pax Americana for the 20th Century."

— GEMINI NEWS

Morality Development through UN Approach

by Dr Abu Obaidul Huque

MODERN civilisation is beset with multifarious social problems. Human immorality is one of these most crucial problems, which gives birth to many other problems seriously affecting the peaceful as well as meaningful living of human beings in the society. In fact, social crimes of all kinds occur mainly due to human activities devoid of moral senses. To prevent and curb crimes at all levels, moral development from individual to universal level has become quite essential now. In this regard, a proposal, "Moral Development Approach (MDA)" has been put forward before the United Nations for consideration and implementation in the greater interest and welfare of mankind: To upgrade and maintain the moral conscience of the world population which will ultimately accelerate the process of achieving worldwide peace and justice at individual, social and universal level.

MDA Introduction: Moral crisis at cross roads is a widely talked about issue everywhere in the world today. Morality is one of the best factors in human civilisation in real sense. It is the moral values and institutions which ensures establishment of social peace and order. There is no denying the fact that the morality is the

best virtue of mankind at any level. Nothing of human being is valuable without morality which is fundamental to develop humanity — for differentiating a man from an animal.

Morality is the only source through which a man can develop in himself the heavenly qualities like love, affection, feelings, respect and appreciation for others in the society. It is only the sacred morality which helps individuals or groups of individuals to make all sorts of social justice. Without morality no democratic, judicial and administrative values and institutions in any individual, society or nation can be developed and nurtured.

Immorality is more dangerous than any infectious disease. The virus of immoral qualities and activities of a person has serious effect and influence on others in the society. The immoral diseases, like corruption and dishonesty, spread consciously and/or unconsciously, from individuals to society, from societies to nation, and ultimately from nations to the world as a whole.

Immorality destroys human conscience at individual and social levels. Any immoral person cannot differentiate right from a wrong, just from an unjust, goodness from badness, etc., because his conscience is derailed and killed by bad

qualities he possesses and evil activities he is involved in. Immoral attitudes make a person dishonest and corrupt; immorality and dishonesty move together.

Need for a Programme

Lacking in the above-mentioned moral aspects our different societies and nations have been immensely suffering from disorders, dishonesty, injustice and corruption of all possible sorts. History reveals that immorality in the societies was prevalent in the early days of human civilization, and it prevails today also, but the question is about its degree and intensity. Very unfortunately, the levels of immorality and its consequences are alarmingly high in many of the societies and nations in the world at present. Everybody and every society is very much worried, disgusted and frustrated at that.

Today moral degradation is a serious threat to individual, social, and universal life and peace. Individualised immoralities constitute social immoralities which ultimately lead to national and global immoralities.

Moral pollution is more harmful than environmental pollution. Environmental pollution mainly presents unhealthy

living of mankind whereas the moral pollution kills them mentally with the development of very low level of awareness about all types of crimes they do. In fact the world environmental pollution is being caused by improper activities done by many people in several ways without having any human consideration of others' healthy living in general. Anyway, throughout the world all the countries are thinking and trying to take various steps to tackle the problem of environmental pollution, but practically nothing is being planned and done to tackle the moral pollution problem.

AIDS is a serious calamity for mankind today. The whole world is very much afraid of this disastrous enemy. According to opinions of experts and social scientists, AIDS spreads, in most cases, through immoral activities.

Under such circumstances, the United Nations should come forward with a programme to prevent widespread moral degradation all over the world.

Process of Implementation

To implement the project under question the following steps can be taken by the United Nations:

1) The UN can adopt some

positive steps in establishing some cell/agency/association, like many other programmes of its own, to introduce and promote the activities for moral development throughout the world. This cell/agency/association can organise and propagate this movement throughout the year by publishing bulletins, newsletters, etc., and by organising symposiums, seminars, etc. in different countries.

2) Like many other occasions, the United Nations may observe a particular day and/or a year as "MORAL DAY/MORAL YEAR" throughout the world to develop awareness and consciousness among the world population about moral development and its maintenance.

3) Through Formal Education: Moral development should be one of the aspects of education everywhere in the world. In educational curricula, particularly at lower level, some courses on moral teaching should be introduced and properly taught. The United Nations can encourage the ministries of education of different countries to follow this strategy while developing and implementing their educational curricula and syllabi.

4) Mass-media like TV, Radio, newspapers, magazines, etc. can play a vital role in the matter of developing moral awareness among the peo-

ple. In every nation there should be some special programmes on moral development approach in TV, Radio, newspapers, etc. In this regard, the United Nations can encourage the governments of different countries to follow this strategy.

5) The UN can introduce some provision for annual "AWARDS" for recognised persons/societies/nations with very high moralities. It will work as an incentive in this regard.

Conclusion: In fine, for peace and justice, moral development and its maintenance is a must at individual, social and universal levels. Without moral development we can never expect to establish peace. And there should be an effective movement, as a Moral Development Approach (MDA), to cure and climate this devastating immoral disease from our societies in different geographical regions, of the world to establish peace and justice from individual to universal level. It will certainly reflect upon improving the values of human resources in proper perspective through the improvement of behavioural norms of people.

The writer is Professor and Coordinator of the Institute for Advancement of Science and Technology Teaching (IASTT).

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

RSO congratulations

Sir, We heartily felicitate the parliament of Bangladesh for having passed the historic 12th Amendment Bill reflecting the aspirations of the people of Bangladesh to switch back to parliamentary democracy. We believe this step will bring in a new era of political stability and ensure growth of democratic institutions as well as continued development and progress of Bangladesh.

The people of Arakan have been struggling for realisation of their human rights and democratic aspirations for the last 45 years. They have been ruthlessly suppressed and all their political, social, cultural, religious, economic and personal rights, privilege and claims have been demolished by the fascist military regime named SLORC of Burma. When democracy is strengthening globally and new democracies are emerging, the SLORC regime is bent on crushing the last remnants of democracy in Burma and thereby push the different peoples, including the people of Arakan, back into the medieval age of darkness

turning them into nothing more than serfs. The democratic movement of the people of Arakan spearheaded by RSO is known in the world and the democracies have been increasingly appreciating the right causes of the Arakanese.

The firm footing of Bangladesh on parliamentary democracy will augur in a new impetus to democracy not only in Bangladesh but to the region as a whole. This underlines the message to the anti-democratic and fascist in the region that the democracy shall prevail and all kinds of racism, fascism, suppression and oppression shall collapse ultimately.

While we hail the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition the members of the parliament and the people of Bangladesh on this august occasion, we draw attention to the plight of the Arakanese people who have been subjected to a new wave of gruesome tortures and oppressions by the military regime and we call upon all democratic peoples of the world including the people and the government of

Bangladesh to bear utmost pressure through United Nations (UN), OIC and other world forums on the Burmese government to concede the rightful, democratic and the human rights demands to the people of Arakan.

Dr Mohammad Yunus, President, Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), Arakan

Rigours of retirement

Sir, Through the courtesy of your Letters column I am drawing the kind attention of Fayza Haq — whose very nice feature captioned as above appeared on the issue of August 13.

I am sure many more like me must have well appreciated the feature for it's very beautiful and most painful coverage touching on many essential humanitarian aspects of the old people, who at their disposal had many many years of successful service career or the like, but at present passing their days with agony, neglect and utter frustration only because of age factor and nothing else.

I am particularly referring to the concluding paragraph of the feature whereupon the writer has expressed her passion and strong willingness for making a club for the elderly people and I am personally interested and like sharing this idea of a noble mission of life, so that the valuable wishes and last days of the old generation, and the passion of the retired

people, do not and are not allowed to quickly decay before finally falling as dry leaves of the winter.

Once more, most wholeheartedly, I congratulate the writer for touching on a most humanitarian issue of the old generation of this country and I equally request all friends and sympathisers to boldly come forward in organising the club and if possible a newspaper too for the old.

Anwar Ul Mohsin, House 30/2, Road 13/2 (Old) Jigatola, Dhaka-1209.

Referendum

Sir, Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and all esteemed members of the Parliament deserve our heartfelt congratulations and appreciation for passing the Constitution 12th Amendment Bill recently in the Jatiya Sangsad. Now as per the Constitutional requirement, a referendum is to be arranged to seek public opinion on the amendment bill.

We're wondering if the Jatiya Sangsad could find out some ways or means to avoid the holding of the referendum. Because such referendum will cost huge expenditure. Moreover 80% of our people do not have enough understanding about the form of government or the importance of their votes on the issue. Cannot we accept the verdict passed by the people's

representatives in the parliament? They have already gained the mandate.

M Zahidul Haque, Assistant Professor, Bangladesh Agricultural Institute, Dhaka-1207.

Back to the future

Sir, A Malaysian university will modernize the library systems of Dhaka University — the largest and oldest university in Bangladesh. The quality of its library mostly determines the quality of education an institution is equipped to provide that produces its typical image.

The image of the Dhaka University-Oxford of the East — has been downgraded by the prevailing unacademic atmosphere owing to chronic deadly campus violence, session jam, and inadequate infrastructural facilities, among the prime causes. An unofficial allegation points to the involvement of a number of teachers, students, and employees in the campus unrests rotting the nation's education industry; and the eligibility of those university people had been questioned repeatedly.

Now, what the scenario in the country's education sector is apprehended to be developing into may bring in only pathetic results. Based on the past records, someone may still be wondering why Bangladesh at the Commonwealth Education Ministers' Conference hoped that the

Commonwealth would be able to tilt the balance in favour of peace, progress and development, if not because of the "knowledge gap." Who knows what will cure the ailing Bangladeshi education and when? What about its end products? The correct answers are known probably to the campus-men.

M Rahman, Zila, School Road, Mymensingh

Against the wind

Sir, Whether the 11th and 12th amendment to the constitution deserves such a big ovation by declaring a day as a national holiday? As a poor nation we could have welcomed this event by doing overtime in our respective fields.

Is there anyone sensible to assess the loss, in terms of money, for declaring one day holiday?

I do not find any sense in when the bill passed by parliament is still to get through the referendum. The people have every right to accept or reject the bill passed by the parliament. In case of rejection by the people, who will bear the cost of one day holiday, or if the people accept the amendment, will we get another holiday? There is nothing to reject for anyone. By this letter I want to register my lone dissent may be against the wind.

M. Saleem Ullah, Advocate, Motijheel C/A., Dhaka.