

7th November

On this day in 1975, a combined uprising of soldiers and the common people toppled a coup led by Brigadier Khaled Mosharraf and after releasing Maj Gen Ziaur Rahman from confinement, installed him into power. Gen Zia retained Justice Abu Sadat Mohammed Sayem as president, declared him to be the Chief Martial Law Administrator with himself along with the two chiefs of Navy and the Air Force as the three deputies. Though Gen Zia was one of the three deputies it was evident from the outset that it was he who had effective power and not anyone else. Those were indeed very chaotic days. Starting from August 15, through Nov 3, the jail killings and the killing of the army officers on the 7th November morning, the situation in the country was not only serious but also very unpredictable. It was in these circumstances that Gen Ziaur Rahman took over the reigns of power.

The most commendable achievement of the new leader was to bring law and order in the country, especially in the capital city, and restore the chain of command within the armed forces. It was a very difficult and complex role that Gen Zia had to play during the first few days of the uprising. As he enjoyed tremendous popularity with the common soldiers, they took him to be their representative. But as a career soldier he knew too well that a dangerous thing an army without discipline and command and control can be. So in one sense he was representing the common soldiers, but in another sense he was thoroughly opposed to what a section of the jawans were doing under the banner of 'Sipahi Biplob' (soldiers revolution). Through his careful handling of the situation he brought the wayward jawans under control and on the other he restored the confidence of the officers to take back the command that they had lost during the early hours of the uprising. This was a trying time and he controlled the situation admirably.

The day also saw an outpouring of a sense of solidarity and unity with a very strong patriotic fervor. People came out in their thousands into the streets of Dhaka and expressed their solidarity with the uprising. General mass did not know what had happened or what were to happen. But there was in the air, on that day, a feeling that the nation was faced with some sort of danger and that there had to be a public expression of solidarity and oneness. All sorts of slogans could be heard in the streets of Dhaka on the 7th morning. But there was one which was in everybody's mouth — that independence and sovereignty of the nation must be, and will be, guarded by every citizen. It was a most gratifying and reassuring slogan.

Like so many other events in the chequered history of our not so old country, the story of this very day is more complex and involved than just one of Gen Zia coming to power. The so-called 'Sipahi Biplob' will be term by some as a lost opportunity to establish an egalitarian society. For others the events of the early hours of this day, was a sure formula for disaster which was saved only by the coming of General Zia on the scene. Whatever a detailed study of the history of this day's events should reveal, it can be said that coming of Gen Ziaur Rahman to power restored law and order and prevented further blood letting on that occasion. Later he re-introduced multi-party democracy in the country and by so doing contributed to the process of restoring democracy.

DUTA Goes Half-way

The Dhaka University Teachers Association's (DUTA) decision to exempt B.A. (Hons) and M.A. examinations from their work-stoppage actions is a welcome one, particularly in view of the lack of decisive actions from other quarters. The teachers' decision will, with any luck, compel the university authorities to look for ways to hold the exams as quickly as possible. An inability to take bold and positive decisions has really come to characterise the present university Syndicate, and the sequence must be broken sooner rather than later. Vice Chancellor Dr. Maniruzzaman Miah now has a clear message from the teaching community that things can be moved forward even under the present atmosphere of uncertainty and mistrust, if campus authorities were prepared to tackle the issue unitedly. It is now incumbent upon the VC to follow up DUTA's gesture of intent by providing teachers with sufficient assurance that security questions could be solved internally, through discussions with the police deployed on the campus.

However, it was also noticeable that DUTA did not make any commitment to invigilate examinations held outside the Dhaka University campus area, which is less than welcome. The teachers know full well that, while we can assume that provision of security during examinations with all other academic and non-academic activities suspended is possible, there cannot be a 100 per cent guarantee of it under present circumstances. By giving an unqualified undertaking to supervise exams, if necessary, off the campus as well, the teachers would force the administration's hand to the point where it would not be able to put the exams off any longer without making itself responsible for the crisis.

With the teachers' agreement behind him, the VC should have no problem whatsoever in breaking with tradition and holding the exams in non-university venues. In other words, both the teachers and the administration must give each other enough room within which to manoeuvre, as well as be forced to take a quick but positive decision.

We have come halfway now, but we need to go the whole hog, because there cannot be any half-measures any more with exams that have been postponed continually since last July. Ideally, we would like to see Dr. Maniruzzaman Miah convince DUTA that security could be ensured on the campus. But, as often is the case with the campus these days, 'ideal situations' remain simply ideals. Therefore, we must envisage the worst, plan for it and find out ways of averting a further deterioration of the academic crisis while the law and disorder situation remains unchanged (meaning uncertain). That, we are afraid, may mean holding the exams elsewhere. We would like to see some contingency planning for that, with both DUTA and the Syndicate working jointly rather than separately.

Doubts Linger about End to Cambodian Civil War

by Larry Jagan

When four warring Khmer factions signed the Cambodian peace accord last month in Paris the international community trumpeted it as an end to more than 20 years of conflict. The peace plan was brokered by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council who spent more than two years ironing out a deal acceptable to all participants in the conflict. But peace may yet elude Cambodia.

Penh government withdrew their insistence that Pol Pot and other Khmer Rouge leaders responsible for the carnage of the years 1975-78, be tried for genocide. But the prospect of the same leaders returning to Phnom Penh in the near future fills them with dread.

Later this month the Supreme National Council, set up under the Paris agreement to include representatives of all former Khmer factions under the presidency of Sihanouk — moves to its new headquarters in Phnom Penh. With the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), it is to steer the country to elections, provided survey teams can prepare the necessary groundwork in time.

Already the Khmer factions are steeling themselves for the forthcoming vote. Hun Sen and the Cambodian parliament only

recently renounced their commitment to Marxism-Leninism and changed the name of the communist Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party to the Cambodian People's Party.

Hun Sen's biggest gesture towards multi-party democracy has been the unceremonious sacking of party president Heng Samrin, a pro-Vietnamese hardliner, and a declaration of support for Prince Sihanouk as head of the future Cambodian state. This represents both an attempt to bolster his electoral chances and a recognition that Sihanouk has the most vital role to play if the Paris peace agreement is to succeed.

The rest is up to the UN, which is sending some 10,000 personnel, both civil and military, to oversee the country's administration and guarantee

law and order. Estimates put the total cost of the UN's involvement in Cambodia at about \$1 billion.

An advance team of 200 UN officials, including 50 military officers are on their way to Phnom Penh. The UN Secretariat hopes to have drawn up the final plans for UNTAC by mid-December. The plans will then have to be approved by the Security Council. Deployment of the full UN task force is expected to start within three months and will take some six months to complete.

The task force will have its work cut out for it. Unlike in Namibia — where the UN merely monitored national elections following that country's independence from South Africa — the task force in Cambodia will have to do

everything from drawing up the voters' rolls to printing the ballot papers and running polling stations on election day.

UNTAC will monitor the ceasefire and demobilise military forces. UNTAC officials will also have the mammoth task of repatriating the 340,000 Khmer refugees who have spent the last decade in camps along the Thai-Cambodian border.

One of the most critical issues to be resolved is KPLNF insistence that property and land be returned to its pre-1975 owners. Western aid officials readily admit that such a restitution of property would create chaos.

Returning property would render hundreds of thousands of Cambodians homeless and create a bitter divide between Cambodians who were forced to remain behind and endure genocidal conflict for more than a decade and those returning from abroad who could become wealthy overnight by reclaiming their family's former wealth.

The central issue of the ceasefire and demobilisation also worries most observers. Since May a voluntary ceasefire has on the whole been observed despite periodic outbreaks of limited fighting. Nevertheless, Cambodia's defence minister General Tea Banh says: 'In a guerrilla war it is difficult for the central military command to simply tell its troops to stop shooting. They are not always in direct contact and guerrilla forces will

always see self-defence as their primary concern even if they have been ordered to ceasefire.'

Under the treaty signed in Paris the UN will be responsible for disarming some 70 per cent of the four fighting forces and containing the remaining 30 per cent.

The disarming of Phnom Penh's regular army is straightforward, but doubts persist about whether it will be possible to disarm the Khmer Rouge. Some diplomats involved in preparations for the Paris conference admit privately that it will be virtually impossible for UN peacekeepers to verify the disarming of the Khmer Rouge in the remote jungle areas that its fighters use as their power base.

As far back as 1988, according to Khmer Rouge defectors, Pol Pot told his commanders that in the event of a settlement 'our troops will remain in the jungle for self-defence... we will never give up our arms.' There have been reports of the Khmer Rouge burying caches of arms throughout Cambodia. Moreover, it is clear that Pol Pot is still very much in control of the Khmer Rouge and that his strategy is being implemented.

Secret Khmer Rouge documents, prepared over two years ago, instructed Pol Pot's cadres to ferret away arms in preparation for a UN ceasefire. 'We will readily agree to all Khmer factions being disarmed' says the document. 'But for every gun we relinquish we must have three others securely hidden.'

The shadow of Pol Pot still hangs over Cambodia's future amid continuing fears that the days of the killing fields may not be over. — GEMINI NEWS

LARRY JAGAN works for the BBC World Service.

Cambodia: peace at last?



Timeline of Cambodia's history from 1954 to 1991, including events like independence from France, the Khmer Rouge takeover, and the Paris Peace Accords.

ARTICLE 97 of the UN Charter states: 'The Secretary General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.'

General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. The term of the present Secretary General will end on 31 December next and his successor must be elected before then. Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, a Peruvian diplomat, will complete two full five-year terms by the end of this year. This year's field of aspirants for this coveted and very high profile job, is an unusually large one. The UN since its birth in New York in 1945, has its ups and downs. Right now it is enjoying an unusually bright and favourable image, thanks largely to the fact that the number one Superpower, the USA, has channelled all her actions against Mr Saddam Hussein through the UN. IN the sixties the UN was in very bad odour for the USSR, who blocked all resolutions in the Security Council by her veto.

UN Secretary General Sweepstakes

by Arshad-uz Zaman

Throughout the eighties, it was the US, who employed the veto to bail out Israel.

Election to the post of the Secretary General is done by the Security Council and the General Assembly. In the 15-member Security Council, five permanent members wield veto. Therefore, the candidate must cross this first hurdle. In a way this is the most important hurdle of all, and a very preliminary selection has already taken place among this 15-nation body. Two candidates Mr Boutros Ghali of Egypt and Mr Bernard T. P. Childzero of Zimbabwe, have emerged as the favourites for now. There is of course the perennial candidate Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, who has made a name through his activities in the UN Refugee Organisation and lately with the Afghan refugees. His late father The Aga Khan was a

President of the post First World War League of Nations. The handicap for Prince Sadruddin is that he is a kind of world citizen and in a world of power play, it is necessary to belong to a state, who canvasses vigorously for the candidate. From Asia the name of Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Mr Al-Attas has been mentioned. From Europe, Gro Harlem Brundland of Norway, Guylenhammer of Sweden are worth mentioning.

Since the birth of the UN, Mr Trygve Lie of Norway, Mr Dag Hammerskjold of Sweden, Mr U Thant of Burma (now Myanmar), Mr Kurt Waldheim of Austria and the current Mr Perez de Cuellar, have held this most prestigious post. There have been three from Europe, one from Asia and one from Latin America. It

is worth noting that they are all citizens of small states. Chance has played a very important role indeed. Ten years ago when a stalemate developed because US went on vetoing Mr Salim Ahmed Salim, of Tanzania and China retaliated by vetoing the Western and particularly the US-sponsored candidate, the incumbent Mr Waldheim, Mr De Cuellar, who was one of the Under Secretaries General, was elected as a compromise choice. Similarly Mr U Thant was elected following the tragic death in a plane crash of Mr Hammerskjold. Of course Mr Hammerskjold had lost all chances of re-election because he was publicly denounced by Mr Khrushchev, the Head of Government of the Soviet Union, whose shoe pounding performance within the hall of

the UN General Assembly is still remembered.

The present period in the Sweepstakes can be termed as the warming up and the elimination process will continue. Africa has fielded the largest number of candidates. Africa has long clamoured for this job, because she has yet to occupy this post. Africa provides one third of the entire membership of the UN. From this point of view Mr Boutros Ghali of Egypt appears to be the front-runner as of now. He is from an Afro-Arab country, has many years of experience in the Foreign Ministry, and is a Coptic Christian. He is well educated, including the Institut D'Etudes Politiques of the Paris University. Egypt is enjoying a long honeymoon with the US, specially since the last Gulf war. She is the object of frequent largesse from the US. We must also re-

member that in the world at present, nobody could think of becoming Secretary General without a nod from the White House.

We are only at the warm up stage of what is undoubtedly a long distance race. The job has become more coveted than ever before. It is not impossible that an impasse develops like that in 1981. What then? Mr Perez de Cuellar said quite some time ago that he would not be a candidate. Yet he has not made any important enemy except perhaps President Saddam Hussein. On the contrary he has scored high marks during the Gulf war. In the protracted Iran-Iraq war in Khomeini accepted the UN sponsored cease fire.

If you must put a bet, my advice will be — hold it a little longer, because the sweepstakes has just started becoming interesting.

The author is former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary General, OIC.

Najibullah Retreats from Marxism

Left adrift by the defeat of his allies in the Soviet Union, Afghan President Mohammad Najibullah is removing the last remnants of his Marxist economic programme to stay in power. Steve Le Vine of IPS reports from Kabul.

inevitable collapse. The government has given no wheat rations to the elite security forces for five weeks, diplomatic sources say. Civil servants complain they have received none for five months, and no petrol for a year.

Leading merchants say Najibullah's appeal to them, meant to demonstrate flexibility and decisiveness, has instead convinced them he is weak and could fall in just months.

'If Najibullah can't arrange for wheat and fuel for four or five months from now, you will see rebellion in the streets,' said an Afghan political analyst who requested anonymity.

'And if you cannot give enough wheat to the soldiers, to the militia, they will join the people against the government,' the analyst added.

Najibullah's holding on to power after the Soviet pull-out, when even Moscow expected him to fall, has analysts reluctant to predict anything in Kabul. Still, many say his

renowned tactical skills will now face their severest test.

The Moscow coup, led by many of the hardline generals how had guaranteed Kabul's supplies despite the Soviets' own economic crisis, exposed a long-rumoured split in Afghanistan's ruling party.

On the first two nights of the coup, even some moderate government officials joined the radical Marxist wing in beer and vodka binges, toasting the return of Moscow's old guard. When the coup failed, most of the celebrants took a low profile. But others are unconcerned, privately calling for Najibullah's resignation.

'We need to find an alternative to ourselves before the

other side chooses one for us,' said a close aide to the President.

The coup led to a break through in US Soviet negotiations on the Afghan question. In mid September, Moscow and Washington announced they would cut arms to both sides in Afghanistan's 12-year-old war.

Starting Jan. 1, Najibullah will depend on stockpiles to fight Mujahidin rebels. Analysts say his arsenal could quickly empty if the rebels continue to be armed by neighbouring Pakistan, or if they use profit from heroin sales to buy weapons.

Now some Soviet leaders are demanding that the already

shrinking economic aid to Kabul be halted as well.

'For some time, the president was led to believe that time was in his favour, by continuing the were of attrition, wearing out the West's patience with the opposition, thinning out the opposition and creating massive support for his policies,' a top government official said.

'He has been successful in all these fields, but not to the extent that will leave him a happy end... I hope the inner circle doesn't fool him into believing he can survive by just playing with time,' the official added.

Analysts believe Najibullah's new initiative of transferring control of basic commodities to the private sector will prove pivotal to his survival. With this move, he is removing virtually the last remnants of his original 1978 Marxist economic programme.

So far, two traders are importing a total of 300,000 tonnes of wheat from Germany

and Hungary, though it may not arrive in time to ease the shortages.

Some merchants claim they are being exploited to shore up a wobbly government. One skeptical merchant who was asked to import 100,000 tonnes of fuel said he did not believe the Soviets would sell so much petrol, and even so, doubted whether it could be transported cheaply enough to Kabul.

Doubters aside, Najibullah clearly believes he will weather this crisis. And though he insists he now cares more about his place in history than about power, and will quit if a successor can guarantee peace, some Afghan analysts believe he will go only when he is ready or when he is convinced his time is up.

Najibullah has not let anyone strong enough to rise on his own side, and few believe the fractious Mujahidin can unit against him.

'I don't think he is much interested in history,' said a former too government adviser. 'Once you taste power, it is difficult to give it up.'

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.

ICMA exam results

Sir, Unusually long delay in announcing the results of the ICMA examinations of 1991 is causing great hardship and inconvenience to the examinees. It may be noted that the examinations of all stages/semesters were held simultaneously.

While the more meritorious, and consequently more confident of the examinees have already started studying for the next stage, the majority of the examinees who are not so confident are literally on

the horns of a dilemma, without being able to decide whether to study for the next stage or repeat the previous one.

It is worth mentioning that the SSC examinations of the Dhaka and Rajshahi Boards were held almost at the same time as the ICMA examinations. But the results of the Board examinations, in which more than two lac examinees appeared, have already been announced in mid-September. Although the ICMA examinees in each stage do not number

more than a few hundred, it is not understood as to why such a long delay should occur in the announcement of the examination results.

It is all the more exasperating because the ICMA course is a post-graduate course, and as such more deserving of efficient handling than high school examinations.

As such it is requested that the results of the 1991 examinations may be announced as early as possible so that all the examinees may be quit of their worries and anxieties.

A guardian

Upgradation

Sir, It is learnt that BCSIR authority has taken a decision to make arrangement for 20% upgradation of the scientists. Work for implementation of

this decision is said to be going on and bio-data etc from relevant scientists have already been sought.

BCSIR is no doubt a scientific organisation where scientists are, quite naturally, scheduled to get all kinds of facilities. But there are administrative officers and employees whose roles for helping the scientists in implementing research and development works are not negligible. If there were no administrative staff in BCSIR, it wouldn't have been possible on the part of the scientist to prepare budget and salary bills etc or arrange leaseout of processes, patents etc, keeping their more important research works idle.

So both technical and administrative hands are necessary to run an organisation smoothly. But in BCSIR it appears that scientists are only

getting benefits while administrative officers and employees are deprived of the same. This doesn't seem just.

So my fervent appeal is that BCSIR authority will consider the case of upgradation of the administrative officers and employees along side the scientists in the interest of the esteemed institution.

A Hamid Mirpur, Dhaka

Rats and owls

Sir, Among the rodents, rat causes major damage to the field crops as well as to the stored grains. The extent of damage caused by rats is near about 30 to 50 per cent of the total production. There are a number of chemical poisons or rodenticides available for con-

trolling rats. But these chemicals are harmful to other economic insects and animals including poultry birds. Hence application of these chemical involves great risk. At present, many countries in the world are using biological methods for controlling rats. Recently one of our teachers, Prof M. Mozilul Haque visited Malaysia. He told me that in Malaysia, rats are being biologically controlled by means of owls (four country's Laksmi Pencha). An owl eats about 20-25 rats per night. This method is also in use in China and found to be very effective against rats.

Perhaps we can also try this method since owls are available in our country.

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