

TERRORISM AND LIBYA

# Mid-air Bombing of Pan Am Flight 103

## Tribute to a Democrat

The passing away of Aatur Rahman Khan on Saturday has removed from the scene one last living symbol of our earliest struggle for democracy. In this sense, the demise of this veteran politician marks the end of an era in our political history.

The struggle for democracy which started soon after the country won its independence from the British rule manifested itself in many different forms, ranging from the Language Movement to the upsurge against the autocratic rule of the Muslim League, from the setting up of a peace movement against cold war politics to the establishment of a broad-based secular political organisation, the Awami League. In all these movements which eventually shaped the destiny of our country, the late leader occupied a place of honour, always on the front row and quite often as a prime-mover in the preparation of the agenda for the struggle. The involvement of the late Mr Khan in all these movements was motivated primarily by his unflinching commitment to democratic values and by his abiding concern for the rights of our people.

In making his mark in all these movements, or even as the Chief Minister of the erstwhile East Pakistan from 1956 to 1958, the late leader was, more often than not, guided by a spirit of moderation and politics of consensus, an approach that sadly enough, seems to find little favour with our present-day politicians. Not surprisingly, therefore, he could also shun personal authoritarianism and avoid playing to the gallery or making lofty promises that he could not fulfil. Whether, in the process, he turned out to be a weak leader, in the eyes of his countless supporters, is now beside the point. In retrospect, it is more important to recognise that the late Mr Khan was a man of integrity free from any hate or malice towards his political adversaries and, above all, a democrat.

There were many high points in his long political career that began with his joining the Krishak Sramik Party of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq in 1938. However, there were also lapses which his biographers can hardly overlook. While a few of them were probably unintentional, others were naive. He proved a poor organiser of the Bangladesh Jatiya League in 1972, but, after being elected to the parliament in 1973, he joined the ill-fated BAKSAL in 1975. It is also hard to understand what made the late Mr Khan accept prime ministership in 1984 under the then president, Hussain Mohammad Ershad, the position he held for less than a year. His political life, covering nearly six decades, thus ended, not with a bang but with a whimper.

These lapses notwithstanding, the late Aatur Rahman Khan will be long remembered by the people of Bangladesh with respect. What's more, many of his countrymen hope that ideals and principles he believed in continue to enjoy solid support among the silent majority in Bangladesh and that it won't be long before politics of consensus finds its rightful place in our national scenario.

## A Case of Misreporting?

We like to think that this is a case of misreporting.

According to the Indian Express, quoted by wire services, foreigners may soon be asked to pay 130 times more than the locals to see the famed Taj Mahal. The increase would bring the fee to as much as \$10 in place of prevailing eight US cents. The Agra Development Authority has placed the proposal before the government for final approval.

If the proposal goes through, a family of, say, four Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans or Pakistanis would be spending as much as one thousand Indian rupees to see this great wonder of the 17th century, unless, of course, they pass themselves as Indians!

Let us hope that the Agra Development Authority is not serious about it. Even if visitors from SAARC countries are exempted from this increase — in yet another noble gesture towards regional co-operation — it would be still grossly unfair to ask any foreigner, whether or not he or she is travelling on a low budget, to pay such a high fee to see the Taj. After all, the same visitor has probably seen the Pyramids in Egypt free of charge. Later, he or she may be driving down to the Borobudur temples in Indonesia, without being stopped at the gate for an entry fee.

Although these monuments belong to national cultures, they occupy places of honour in human heritage, as legacies of mankind. Access to such historical sites for people of all nationalities, old and young, rich and poor, should be easy, unhindered and preferably free of charge.

According to the Indian daily, the Agra Development Authority is interested in raising the entry fee for the Taj to pay for the maintenance and repairs of this great monument, said to be badly exposed to pollution from industries located in the area. One way of dealing with this problem would be for New Delhi to approach UNESCO for technical and financial assistance. Another way is to ask for voluntary contributions from visitors to the Taj.

TERRORISM stands condemned universally. It is inhuman and abominable. The death of helpless passengers — men, women and children — by terrorists' mid-air bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December, 1988 appalled the entire world. But who performed this heinous crime? The US and the UK, after their own investigations accused two Libyan intelligence agents for the crime. Libya denied the charges. Obviously none at state level would accept the liability of such a crime. It is not only Libya, even the Israeli Intelligence hold different opinion on the incident. Israel says, "Palestinian terrorists based in Syria — and not Libyan agents, as charged last week by the US — bore primary responsibility for bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland."

Neither the US nor Israel have made the details of the investigation reports public. There is no doubt that both have their own bases for their conclusions. Israel, however, clearly said that "the US was motivated by political considerations: a desire to avoid pointing a finger at Palestinians or their Syrian sponsors at a time when Syria's cooperation is needed to push the Middle East peace process forward." It also said that "Israel is not pleased with the skirting of the Syrian involvement in terrorism." Though the US, at times, depends on Israeli intelligence for its M-East operations, this time Israeli intelligence reports seem to have been ignored for the reasons of present political

considerations — the allegations Israel tries to label against the US.

### US Defends Findings

The US, however, has continued to defend its own findings. At a "tense and emotional meeting" with the members of the Pan Am victims the administration showed "displeasure" when some of the victims' family members commented adversely against the administration. According to the family members the US investigations "unearthed no evidence linking Syria and Iran to the downing of the airliner." There is, however, no doubt that the Israeli report and the reactions of the victims' family members have strengthened Libya's position.

As the container of the bomb was destroyed, the US, British and other authorities conducting the investigations apparently had to depend largely on reports including X-ray reports, interrogations, and also probably assumptions. As it seems from various reports the US intelligence authorities until last year suspected the Jebel Group which, according to Israel, lives in Syria, for the Pan Am bombing in retaliation for the deaths of 290 people due to downing of an Iranian civilian airliner by the American warship in the Gulf in July 1988 apparently through mistake. But only recently the US intelligence turned its suspicion over Libyan agents on the basis of a tiny plastic piece found in the debris of the Pan Am wreckage. This plastic piece was reportedly embedded in a shirt said to

have come from a suitcase that held the bomb. This was suspected to be a part of a digital electronic timer which was reportedly identical to the timer sold to Libya in 1985-86 by a Swiss Co. The American intelligence pursued the matter in such a way that the shirt was "traced to a shop at Malta." Reportedly these two suspected Libyans had worked in Malta probably at that time for the Libyan Airlines. It was charged that these two Libyans obtained luggage tags and used them to "place the suitcase on a Air

grounds of their bias against Libya because of its worst form of relationship with both the countries. Indeed, the US and Britain have no diplomatic relation with Libya and the US earlier went to the extent of carrying out unilateral bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi again for the alleged involvement of Libya in other terrorist attacks. Libya is reportedly not prepared to accept US indictment and hand over the alleged suspects for trial outside Libya. It also has taken shelter under diplomatic lacuna that Libya does not have any extradition

diction of one court — either Libyan or Scottish court. It seems that Libya has the right to ask for the trial of its citizens, when they are now in Libyan soil, in its own court. The US and the UK also appear right to claim jurisdiction of the Scottish court as the bombing took place over Scotland. There is, however, no doubt that law will take its own course whether it is in Libya or in Scotland. The court can not be biased. The court will not go by hearsay or anyone's political motives. Hard facts and sure evidence will have to be produced before the court to prove the case. In such a situation no party should be worried about the fate of the case. The real purpose is to bring the culprits to book and doing so all possible internationally accepted measures must be explored.

decision should be taken by majority vote in the Security Council and all parties must agree in advance to go by the decision of the Council.

This time the US has to be extremely careful in dealing with Libya as it is engaged in an historic peace making exercise in the M-East. Any hasty erratic step may put Bush-Baker peace efforts in jeopardy. Let the US slowly build up the world opinion including Arab support before moving against Libya. The Arab League also in their recent decision advised the US and the UK against any economic sanction or military action against Libya. Military action can hardly attain the objective. The US tried it once and could not reach the "target." It is not sure that they can reach it again. Moreover, such "target" is not only one — they are many and indeed more are created through such military action. Therefore, idea of any military action must be abandoned. Indeed, incredible developments have taken place in the M-East. Syria joined the US in its operation against an Arab State; Saddam stands defeated and humiliated; Palestinians sit in the negotiating table with the Israelis and shake hands — though unwillingly — with them; Iran inching towards the West; the hostage drama is almost over; Libya declared cutting off its links with the terrorist establishments and seized its own citizens on US and UK charges and agreed on investigation by an International Commission of Enquiry on which it will have no control. Nothing should be done to disturb the trend.

## SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

### Muslehuddin Ahmad

Malta flight to Frankfurt connecting finally with Pan Am Flight 103, which took off from London to the United States on December 21, 1988. Thus it was alleged to be "Libyan government operation from start to finish." But reportedly the Israeli agents "believe that the available evidence is not enough to convict the Libyans." Though the US is sure about its own investigation results, some others are not Libya has obviously taken the advantage of the differing investigation results.

### Libya for International Investigation

As Libya has demanded international investigation into the disaster, its attitude is, therefore, not a totally negative one. Libya challenged the US and British investigation results not only for the above reasons but also on the

treaty with the US and Britain. Libya has, however, seized both the suspects and invited both the US and Britain to send their representatives to Libya with investigation records and proper evidence so that these two suspects could be tried in Libyan court. This was unacceptable to the US and Britain. Britain has claimed that the Scottish court had the jurisdiction over the case and the accused should be tried there. Now it seems to be a dispute over the jurisdiction of the court as Libya does not have any objection to putting these accused on trial in Libyan court. As this is a case of international character and importance the following option seem available.

With a view to avoiding major political and diplomatic crisis the parties concerned should reconsider their positions and agree on the juris-

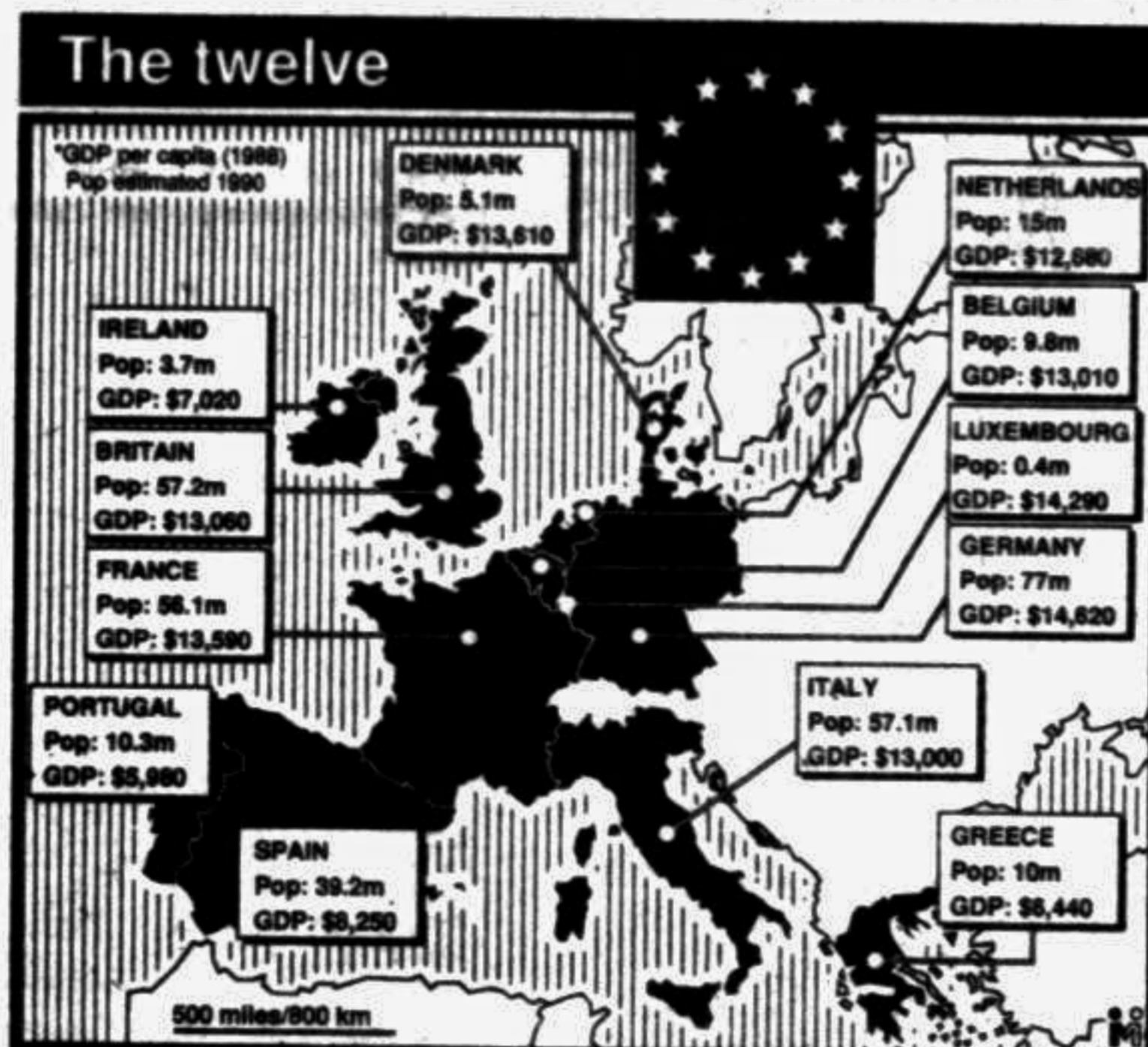
### Security Council

However, in case dispute about jurisdiction continues between parties the best course would be to refer the case to the UN Security Council for decision. As the UN is now directly involved in solving other terrorist problems like famous hostage swap in Lebanon and its performance is undoubtedly laudable, it would be prudent to involve the UN in this case as it is of serious international concern. Let the UN Security Council look into the case and decide whether this should be dealt with by the International Court of Justice, any International Commission for investigation or by any other court. In such a decision no veto should be applied. The

# The Hot Topic at Maastricht is Immigration

Hilary Clarke writes from Brussels

Leaders from the 12 European Community governments are holding a summit in the Dutch city of Maastricht (Dec 9-10) to decide on a political and monetary union. But dominant at the meeting is likely to be the need to forge a common refugee policy. The twelve fear large-scale immigration from eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The issue is also one which affects the Third World.



WHEN European Community (EC) heads of government meet today and tomorrow at the summit in Maastricht, Holland, to decide on a political and monetary union for the 12, proposals on what the world's wealthiest group of nations do in the poor world are likely to pass on the road.

But how to react when the poor world comes to knock physically on the EC door is proving a major stumbling block in drafting the new treaties.

Development, at least in the context of economies in the southern hemisphere, was a concept unknown to the so-called founding fathers of the Community.

When the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, the then six EC nations almost forgot to include provisions setting down the terms of co-operation with what were then European colonies.

At the midnight hour of the negotiations France, the biggest colonial power in the talks, took the other five nations by surprise and insisted a special annex be attached to the text that would, in theory at least, clarify relations between the EC and its overseas territories.

Twenty-five years on, the world is a more difficult place and the gap between rich and poor nations has grown, and at least some of the responsibility of the former colonisers to try to rectify the situation, has been recognised.

Only a handful of far-flung islands have still to obtain their independence from EC countries. Most no longer wish to do so.

The Cold War is over and oppressive Third World regimes once tolerated by the EC as a buffer against communism have now become the bogymen.

Democracy and environmental sustainability are now seen by the EC as the key to

making the Third World a nicer place to live in. The ulterior motive is that if things are tolerable at home, then people from the developing world will stay there and not try to immigrate to Europe.

Acceptance of the principle that development policy should come under the framework of political union was one of the first points in the run-up to talks where the Community governments saw eye-to-eye.

Dieter Frisch, who heads the development directorate in the European Commission, which is the executive arm of the EC, said: "When you consider that the EC spends almost three billion ECUs in

development aid, its logical member-state governments want some say in how that money is spent."

Development aims, with special reference to linking aid to democracy and human rights and environmental sustainability, should if, all goes well, be anchored into the new EC treaty on political union.

Several EC governments have balked, however, at a Dutch proposal to go even further, and bring the Lome Convention — the EC aid and trade pact with its former colonies, in Africa the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) — into the framework of European political union.

Fears are that because the Convention also includes a parliamentary assembly between the ACP governments and the European parliament, the only elected body of the EC, foreign policy powers might be taken out of the hands of EC governments and given to Euro-MPs, by the back door.

How much power should be given to the European Parliament is one of the more sensitive issues in the talks, which will also reshape the Community's internal constitution and decision-making processes.

But if a compromise is quickly reached on forging a common foreign policy vis-à-vis the developing countries, one of the major obstacles to a deal at Maastricht is a row over "internal security," which includes political asylum and immigration.

Eight of the 12 are strong supporters of abolishing EC internal frontiers. The Benelux countries, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain have signed the so-called Schengen Treaty which allows the free movement of foreigners within the signatories' boundaries and lays down common rules for visas and dealing with asylum requests.

The two countries with most qualms about the current proposals to incorporate Schengen-like policies into the new EC treaty on political union are Germany and Britain.

The alarming rise of the Flemish neo-national party the Vlaams Blok in the November 24 general elections in normally passive Belgium, home of

the EC institutions, was a dramatic reminder of the growth of anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe.

Immigration has become the hot issue for EC governments, and all are afraid of appearing soft on the matter. Nowhere is this more apparent than Germany where attacks on foreigners by right-wing extremists have become an everyday occurrence.

For Germany, the immigration "threat" is primarily from its Eastern European neighbours. While would be immigrants to Europe from the developing countries need to get on a plane or cross the sea, those seeking the western dream from the former communist countries can drive, or even walk across EC frontiers.

The German government, which would like to change its comparatively liberal asylum laws but lacks the necessary two-thirds parliamentary majority to do so, is therefore pressing to pass the buck to the EC by increasing EC control of European immigration and refugee policy.

Britain wants to lose no control whatsoever over immigration and asylum matters. In fact, like most EC countries, Britain, which has over the last decade or so tightened up its immigration laws to almost close its frontiers (it fines airlines which carry Third World asylum-seekers without the correct papers).

London is the most reluctant participant in the political union talks, consistently objecting to any move requiring it to

give up anything wildly connected with national sovereignty.

On immigration policy, the fears are that if EC visa requirements were harmonised, North Africans and Turks, already established in other parts of Europe, would suddenly decide to hop over the Channel to Britain.

On the eve of the summit, Britain was showing no signs of budging. A late draft of the treaty forming the basis of the Maastricht talks would give the EC rule-making powers for short-term visas and for procedures at its external frontiers. These would be decided by a qualified majority of EC governments.

The European Commission would gain equal powers to EC capitals to draft legislation in the immigration and asylum field, although as the text stood, the real powers over asylum, immigration and deportation would be left to EC governments.

The Maastricht summit will study a document on the shortcomings and anomalies of present EC asylum arrangements when each country treats those who come to them in different ways. One of the main tasks of forging a common refugee policy will be how to determine which governments are so harsh that fleeing from them to the EC is justified.

Desperate for a common policy, Germany has begun to show signs of compromise, indicating that it would prefer to give Britain an opt-out clause that would allow it to enter an agreement on visas and asylum policy later on.

Whatever deal is struck on immigration in Maastricht, the message from the EC governments is clear: those on the outside of Fortress Europe wishing to come should think twice before packing their bags. — GEMINI NEWS

## 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.

**CU crisis** important matter lingers for so long.

**Recognition to Bangladesh**  
Sir, I have noticed the editorial under caption "Thank you Bhutan" in the 3rd December issue of your esteemed daily. You have claimed that Bhutan is the first country of the world that recognized Bangladesh as an independent state on December 31 1971. But what was my knowledge, before looking at your editorial, that India was the first country that recognized Bangladesh on December 6, 1971. The general knowledge of 'Baral' and various BCs-

guides have registered the date of first recognition as 6th December 1971 given by India. Which one is correct?

Dilip Kumar Banik  
Korbarigongce, Ctg.

India was the second country to recognise. —Edtr.

**Begum Zia**

Sir, In the November 17 issue of the London's "Sunday Times Magazine", a feature covering a day in the life of Begum Khaleda Zia was published. In the feature, the Prime Minister described the routine of her daily life and expressed some of her personal feelings and sentiments.

I very much appreciate her feelings as she narrates — "There are so many problems with the backlog after nine years of misrule, where there has been indiscipline and chaos in the country, that I often find it difficult to sleep. But I believe that we will finally overcome the problems —

especially injustice and corruption. There are so many thoughts, so many problems to be solved. So sleep doesn't come easily."

Like all other leaders, Begum Zia is also not out of criticism. Politically, the opposition parties often criticize her stance as the country's head of the government. But one fact cannot be denied that Begum Zia unlike many others never compromised with the last nine year's autocratic regime. She and her party never joined with the autocrats for making fictitious elections and to form so called democratic government. She boldly faced all the adversities and accepted all sorts of troubles to reach today's democratic order.

We sincerely hope that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will take bold steps to banish corruption and injustice from our soil. And through her dedicated leadership she will be successful in creating an environment where not only she but everyone especially the

common people of Bangladesh will be able to enjoy safe and sound sleep at night, when every morning will break with new promise and hope.

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

**Pakistani visa**

Sir, We know that there are over a million Bangalis now living in Pakistan. They are mostly poor people and cannot manage plane fare (about Tk 20,000 up-down) to come and see their relations here. Those people who have relation in Pakistan may also like to go to see them there. But it is an apathy on the part of the Government of Pakistan and their representatives here who refuse the visa to these people. There could be pressing need to see one's relation, yet it does not work. SAARC has been formed. Exchange of delegates take place. Rich and influential peoples' visit is arranged. But all this is force

in case of the common men and women who can't see their ailing relation, can't attend marriage of a near and dear one.

All of us speak in terms of improving the quality of life and relations between the peoples of third world countries, yet in practice we put obstacle, formally and informally. Let the leaders and social workers and peace-makers realise the human problem of the sub-continent and do something to help the helpless. Through SAARC a lot of facilities have been created for the rich and affluent but hardly anything for the poor. Greater good for the greater number should be the goal and spirit of SAARC — if it is desired to be a meaningful organisation.

A citizen,  
Dhaka