

Seventh Round — Israel Indicates "Withdrawal"

Evidence against Ershad

That Ershad was a notorious man was known to all. His notoriety brought his downfall and the entire country rose in anger against him.

Now the US Senate sub-committee in Washington has found fresh evidence that Ershad channelled as much as 520 million US dollars out of the country through the suspended Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI).

Yet the troubling question is: why did we not take up the case ourselves for bringing out the facts soon? After two long years it is the US Senate that does the job in proxy.

The fact Ershad smuggled out money with active help from people in key positions can under no circumstances be lost sight of.

In this connection, let us make it a point that the accountability of the public representatives is a key question for good and right governance.

Game of Good Hope

History of a sporting kind is being created today at the Kinghead Stadium in the city of Durban on the Cape of Good Hope.

The tumultuous reception accorded to the Indian team by the people of Durban, many of whom are of Indian descent and long deprived of basic civil rights under South Africa's apartheid system.

Negotiations between the government and the African National Congress of Nelson Mandela has been bogged down for months now.

South Africa's return, like in all other sports, was linked to the progress in dismantling the last vestiges of apartheid from public life.

THE 7th Round of M-East Peace Talk was adjourned as serious tension surfaced in the negotiation.

This is the first time Israel mentioned the word "Withdrawal" in presenting their negotiating document relating to Syrian Golan Heights which Israel captured in 1967 war.

Various interpretations of the word "Withdrawal" have appeared in subsequent press briefings by Israeli negotiators and Politicians but Prime Minister Rabin came out with his inner thought on the issue.

Therefore, in any future negotiations the Arabs will have to keep this in view and bid for the maximum. But in any case they will have to be prepared for necessary concessions.

The extent of adjustments

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would depend on two things: (a) how much land Arabs are agreeable to sacrifice (b) the extent of security zone Israel needs.

The character and the pace of the peace negotiation might change with the departure of President Bush from the White House, who had almost a personal commitment for achieving some form of peace between Israel and Arabs.

In the 7th round one detected Israeli effort to pursue Camp David style of negotiations when they indicated the idea of "Withdrawal" from Golan Heights.

SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

Muslehuddin Ahmad

which can not be ruled out totally as President Assad of Syria may be prepared to do anything to get back his strategic Golan Heights.

try to put up a joint front of some sort and look for a comprehensive solution of the M-East problems.

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reactions on recent killings of Israeli soldiers in south Lebanon. The Arabs also appear determined to pursue the peace process with all seriousness.

The best course for the new Administration would be to start a dialogue with PLO. This will induce Prime Minister Rabin to move forward towards PLO.

As a "confidence" building measure the new Administration should indeed encourage adversaries in M-East to start having direct contacts. It is good to have formal peace negotiations but positive and quick results can only be achieved through direct contacts between leaders who are in a position to give decision.

Thousands of Portuguese Wait to Go Back to Angola

David Orr writes from Luanda

THOUSANDS of Portuguese who once lived in Angola are anxiously watching developments there following its first ever general elections.

Most Portuguese left Angola at independence in 1975 and 10,000 have gone back since the civil war ended last year.

Spry 68-year old businessman Alfonso Carneiro first arrived in Angola on Christmas Day 1953. He says: "I lived in the north of Portugal, a very poor region with no opportunities. I came here to make a better life for myself."

Unlike the Kenyan Highlands which were settled by upper and middle-class Britons, Angola was essentially the province of uneducated peasants. For the 500,000 Portuguese who lived there from the 1950s until the mid-1970s, Angola was a land of boundless opportunity.

But when fighting started in 1975 between the MPLA and FLNA rebels (at that time allied to Unita), Alfonso and his family fled in fear of their lives.

When he returned to Portugal in 1975, he says,

In Angola's first elections since independence in 1975 President Eduardo dos Santos just failed to win the required 10 per cent majority. South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha has tried to broker a power-sharing deal. But violence is breaking out again and real peace remains uncertain.



some people regarded him as stupid because he had not brought back enough wealth. To others he was a rogue because he had "stolen" from black Angolans.

Now he is returning to start up import business and reclaim the property he left behind. So far, however, he has

what happened in the past." But the country to which Alfonso Carneiro is returning is very different from the one he left 17 years ago.

The huge iron ore mines at Cassinga have been closed and official production of diamonds has fallen sharply. Manufacturing output has been decimated and now suffers severely from shortage of spare parts, lack of investment and a dearth of skilled personnel.

Alfonso looks around at the piles of rotting garbage in the streets of the capital, Luanda, and says: "I'm very sad. This country used to be highly productive and efficient. It used to be a really great place to live. Now it's miserable. Nothing works. All the people with knowhow have left."

The people with knowhow to whom he refers are those like himself who left when civil war broke out. The whites ran Angola in those days. Even menial jobs such as hairdressing, driving taxis and bartending were held by the Portuguese.

At independence, after four centuries of Portuguese colonialism, 98 per cent of the

blacks were illiterate. Few had any technical or administrative skills.

When the Portuguese left in the largest white migration Africa had ever known they took with them not just their knowhow but everything they could lay their hands on.

Alfonso Carneiro does not defend his countrymen's record. Before independence, the Portuguese shamelessly took the profits from Angola's natural resources and forced the local people to work on coffee, sisal and maize plantations.

He says: "I employed 250 men and I paid them decent wages. We brought more development to Angola during the Fifties and Sixties than the country had got in the previous four centuries."

The new Angola he surveys is the product not just of 400 years of colonial exploitation. It is also the result of nearly three decades of war and 17 years of economic mismanagement by an autocratic government.

The war of independence was succeeded by a brutal civil war between the ruling MPLA and rebel groups. The government was, supported by the Soviet bloc and 50,000 Cuban troops, the rebels by the United States and South Africa.

ruins with tens of thousands dead and countless billions of dollars squandered on armaments.

Alfonso Carneiro says: "Things are in a bad way, but I'm optimistic about the future. Angola has great potential. This could be one of the richest countries in Africa. It's got tremendous resources: oil, diamonds, all sorts of minerals."

The coming months will be crucial if Angola is to have a chance to rebuild itself and attract foreign investment. While some hold bitter memories of the Portuguese presence in their country, most Angolans live comfortably alongside those who decided to stay and are willing to welcome back those who wish to return.

Perhaps more than any other African country, Angola is an integrated society with no overt tensions between white, black and mestizo (people of mixed African and Portuguese ancestry).

"I love this country, I owe it a lot," says Alfonso Carneiro, who wants his son, Ildio, to follow in his expatriate footsteps. "I am an Angolan first and a Portuguese second."

What happens on the political front will have much bearing on whether people like the Carneiro family are able to pursue their African dreams. In the aftermath of the election victory of President Dos Santos and the MPLA, a role has yet to be found for Jonas Savimbi and his Unita opposition.

Instability or a renewed outbreak of hostilities could prove fatal for the rebuilding programme. But with strong leadership and the right direction, Angola could be one of Africa's success stories. Is it ultimately likely?

DAVID ORR is freelance British journalist who recently visited Angola.

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.

Right to express

Sir, This is in response to the letter of Mr Kamal Haque, which was published in the 16th October issue of your paper. I would like to thank him for his support of Naheed Kamal's article called "No one can forbid us the future" and express my gratitude for his understanding of the issue she was trying to get across to the readers of the article.

I can guess of many people who would like to think of the "Rising Stars" page as one based on things which seem conventional for children and thus require that it be written in a style suitable for "young eyes only".

for themselves and that it was not just another "junior" page published by adults who think they know the young of today so well and write on mostly what they themselves experienced when they were young, or whatever seems 'ethical' for a young person to read about in a national daily.

Today's world does not allow for the naive view yesterday's did. The key to survival is awareness and the right thing for us who can make others aware of the things they should know, via the press, is to do just that. Naheed's article on premarital romance could hardly have come as much of a shock to the average Dhakate teenager for it was a relation of what he/she was going through at the time, although the majority will play the innocent when questioned on the topic.

for while they may call it the offence of the innocent, I am doubtless that it is plainly their own indignation at the changing trend in society which they are trying to express.

My advice to such offended persons is simple: open your eyes to the real world. Teenage romance may often take place behind the backs of the prohibiting parents but it is not a crime one may deserve capital punishment for.

My advice to such offended persons is simple: open your eyes to the real world. Teenage romance may often take place behind the backs of the prohibiting parents but it is not a crime one may deserve capital punishment for. And so, if the media wants to publicise it, so be it. Freedom of speech in what we believe is a right cannot be withheld simply because the issues raise a few eyebrows.

heard and understood. The former generations may have plans for many of us, but in no way does that mean that we will abandon our own desires. It should not mean it.

Judith G DeCosta Dhaka

Senile ramblings and CNN

Sir, The life span of Bangladeshis being what it is, I calculate that I have been waiting for the Grim Reaper for about 25 years. Perhaps, some angelic bureaucrat long ago must have marked my file 'put up' and quite naturally, a mutant junior assistant secretary, with 'red tape', instead of wings, must have 'put it up' on some remote cloud there to gather celestial dust.

I watch CNN for about three hours daily and would like to

pass comment on some glaring deficiencies, which, I am sure, other viewers must also have noticed. South and West Asian affairs, especially the SAARC countries are totally ignored, and I doubt if there has been a single story from this region during the last few weeks.

However, CNN's lengthy and wide coverage of the US presidential elections is understandable and I have thoroughly enjoyed the candidates being put under the microscope.

Quazi Akhlaque-uz Azeem Anderkilla, Chittagong

"The Fall of a Titan"

Sir, A splendid article "The Fall of a Titan", The Daily Star, Sept 23), troubling and thought provoking touched our hearts. The ignorance and cruelty the campus community shows in matter of trees perturb us. Early this year, in a teachers' quarter compound, two nice trees were felled for

no reason whatsoever. How can man cut down so lovely a creation out of his whims, we wonder. These people who live here, are all enlightened and intellectuals. Some intellectuals murdering trees! Your article, we hope, will enlighten some of them. Keep on the good work. The Earth thanks you.

Kids for Saving the Earth Club No-33355 Dhaka (Varsity campus)

School students

Sir, We have noticed with great concern that disciplinary condition has not only deteriorated in the universities and colleges but in the schools as well. It should not be forgotten that the school is the basic home for implanting foundation of education, values, manners, character etc among the children.

We would sincerely call upon the government and the school authorities to take strict measures for maintaining and perpetuating discipline among the school students.

M Zahidul Haque Assistant Professor, Bangladesh Agricultural Institute, Dhaka