Attack on AL Meeting

Another outburst of armed madness nearly brought the country to the brink of political chaos. Last Sunday terrorists attacked the dispersing crowd of a Awami League meeting in Chittagong, infuring fifty, including journalists and policemen. The violence was deliberate and pre-planned, which at one stage threatened the life of Sheikh Hasina. We express our outrage at this breach of security of the second most important political personality of the country, who is also the shadow prime minister in our parliamentary form of government. We condemn this violence and express our very serious concern at the present state of lawlessness and absence of security for the political leaders. Only recently the attempt on the life of Rashed Khan Menon brought to light the vulnerability of the political leaders and what helpless victims they are in the hands of motivated miscreants. The armed attack in the AL meeting is a clear indication that violence has reached a new level and no political figure, however popular or powerful, is beyond the reach of determined terrorists. We have been cautioning the government and also all those political parties who have armed cadres, against their policy of harbouring these mercenary elements, who can as easily turn the gun on the benefactor, as they can, on the 'enemy'.

While the police deserves credit for coming to the rescue of the leader of the opposition and escorting her out of danger, yet serious questions remain about their overall role in preventing political violence. Is the role of the police to be confined to ensuring protection only after the 'fact'? What about intelligence report which can be made available to the leader of the opposition about her own safety? Was there no way the police could have known, or at least foreseen, the violence and either warned the AL chief or taken necessary preventive measures? The press have been given no information in this regard. Partisan or otherwise, the violence in the meeting of Sheikh Hasina is symptomatic of the spread of violence throughout the country. The ruling party and all other political parties, but especially the government, should take serious view of this situation and activate all administrative mechanism to counter this trend. Ensuring peace, and preventing outbreak of armed violence is the fundamental test of every administration. Failing to ensure this, an elected government fails itself.

We welcome the clarification by Sheikh Hasina, that she did not accuse the BNP of complicity in what amounted to be a potential threat to her life. This will help to clear the air and assist the investigating authority in getting the real culprits. However, the statement of AL general secretary, that the Chittagong incident "bore testimony to government's terroristic activities" contradicts the clarification of his party chief. Such mixed signals confuse the people and takes us further away from constructive dialogue between our political parties which is essential for good governance. Where is the seriousness behind making accusations that should be taken very seriously? In matters such as this one, everybody should remain calm and allow some sort of investigation to take place before pointing fingers. What we now have is the unfurling of a vengeful propaganda campaign which will cloud clear thinking and create undue pressure to suit investigative findings to politically arrive at conclusions. Under cover of claims and counter claims the real culprits will disappear and we will be left with more bitterness and acrimony.

We suggest a serious and sincere attempt by the government to unearth the real story behind this attack on Sheikh Hasina. The purpose should not be to malign the AL by bringing to surface its inner conflicts, but to get to the terrorists and to protect democratic norms in politics. If the government does this job with integrity and professionalism then it will perhaps, sow the seeds of understanding that is so very necessary to make our democratic experiment successful.

Prayer for Wisdom

This day is specially marked for offerings to the goddess of learning Saraswati by the devotees of Hindu religion. But an unwavering commitment to learning is what should be on demand all the time, more so because of the widespread uneducation and unenlightenment of heart. Today only marks the renewal, a community's renewal in particular, of that commitment. Offerings to goddess Saraswati every year become meaningful if the pledges made there by the devotees are carried out throughout the year for fulfilment.

At a time when the ugly and the inhuman reign supreme, Saraswati, the symbol of calm beauty combined with impeccable knowledge and virtue, leaves for all a message worth recording. Amidst the gathering darkness, here is a soothing call for looking into one's own heart and to rely on itsnot material - resources. The appeal to human heart cannot go in vain, for it is the greatest of possessions each human being has been gifted with. It is the light of knowledge she stands for and asks everyone pass the same on to others. And wonder of wonders, it is the only resource that never diminishes but gains in strenth with distribution. Blessed are those who offer this precious gift.

Then Saraswati Puja is known to be more of a cultural reawakening than a mere religious festival. That the occasion offers an opportunity for the students of all social classes to dedicate themselves to the cause of making this world a little freer from the stranglehold of illiteracy and evil forces is a service we all need so badly. The celebration has long assumed a non-conservative character and needs to be extended further beyond just the religious rituals. Undeniably, it is because of this offering's more human appeal that it has transcended the barrier of religion so easily. Nevertheless, the hymns recited or the rites performed at the place of worship by the devotees are the prayer for wisdom, enlightenment of heart and continued progress. Let there be the see-

king of blessings for all men and women on earth,

particularly for them who need those most of all.

The Shenzen Style: Its Feasibility in Bangladesh hovereraft service with Kutu-HE Shenzen style of dev-

eloping special economic

L zones (SEZ) away from

the existing constraints of

capital, labour, markets as well

as supplies of utility services

constitutes a new approach to

industrialisation and growth

which has been successfully

tried out in China., If so, why

If the gospel of Shenzen

style is accepted, then we have

to locate a territory which

could be isolated from rest of

the country in terms of flow of

goods and services where a

deep-water port is feasible,

eastly accessible international

air travel could be ensured and

above all, it is possible to cre

atc an autonomous administra-

tive unit with its monetary, fis-

cal and regulatory indepen-

dence, reporting directly to

the beginning of our Shenzen

style development, notwith-

standing the fact that there

could be other areas equally

suitable for the purpose. Being

an island it is isolated but

physical connection may be

established through a bridge at

the narrow north end of the

Kutubdia channel. In addition,

a hovercraft service from

Chittagong port will be a very

convenient way to reach the is-

land. A new road branching off

from the old Arakan road

across the channel bridge will

connect the Kutubdia Special

Economic Zone (SEZ) to the

rest of the country. The exist-

ing railway line upto Dohazari

railway station if extended

upto Kutubdia, will imply di-

rect train service between

Dhaka and the proposed SEZ.

Foreign investors and bankers

on arrival at Dhaka airport can

take the short walk along with

the luggage trolley upto the

railway station to be located

across the road from the air-

port, board the express train

and reach Kutubdia in a few

hours time. Initially it may be

cheaper to develop Chittagong

as the second international

airport of the country and link

it up through the proposed

HE Structural Adjustme-

L Zambia has moved along

better than most, if not all, the

other countries of the sub-

Saharan region. Within a year

of the new government's

popular rise to power,

President Fredrick Chiluba has

daringly implemented all the

IMF and World Bank's tough

conditions and allowed market

forces to run the whole

His relations with the donor

community, unlike those of his

predecessor, Kenneth Kaunda,

have sharply improved. Aid,

cut off under Kaunda last year,

has poured in to the tune of

\$1.7 billion in 1992 - most of

it, outright handouts from

valued the kwacha by 120 per

cent, freed prices and bank

interest rates (to be deter-

mined by market forces), lib

eralised trade, commerce and

industry activities and abol-

ished foreign exchange con-

trols in favour of bureaux de

programme has already seen

19 state companies sold while

up to 40 of the 200-odd

parastatals are to be sold next

year. Chiluba also sanctioned

the sacking of 20,000 workers

throughout the public service

In addition, his privatisation

For his part, Chiluba has de-

economy unrestrained.

Paris Club donors.

change.

penditure.

nt Programme (SAP) in

Kutubdia island might be

the Head of the Government.

not in Bangladesh.

Feasibility

The island has an area of about 110 sq. km., little over 12,000 households, two-thirds of whom are engaged in raising crops from 5,300 hectares of net cultivated land. Ofven the available area, an SEZ, twothird the size of Shenzen, is feasible at Kutubdia. A deep sea port is feasible along the west em side of the island. Gas discovered offshore from Kutubdia could be exploited for petro-chemical industry, fertiliser, generation of electricity and manufacture of sponge iron based on imported ore Salt based chemical industry is also possible. A separate fish harbour and ship-building yard can be set up while facilities at the SEZ could be the base for off-shore oil exploration in the Bay of Bengal. In a nutshell, heavy industries, fish process ing, chemicals, steel and above all, labour intensive manufac turing for exports are all fea-

The design of development is entirely based on what has already happened at Shenzen and like Shenzen, the Island may be divided into economic zones consisting of a business district at the centre, deep sea port, heavy industries, oil refineries and off-shore oil prospecting facilities in the north, fish harbour in the south along with processing and export facilities, while the eastern part along the Kutubdia channel earmarked for labour intensive manufacturing industries. Residential areas can be developed in the intervening spaces so that commuting time can be minimised. The entire island might eventually become a large metropolis of about a million people with quarter million jobs of all kinds. Kutubdia could be like liong Kong - replicated in coastal Bangladesh.

Advantage It is possible. It is feasible

because of the several compet-

itive advantages ready to be

deep-water port is feasible. Second, already discovered gas deposits off Kutubdia should be the basis for petro- chemical industries, electricity generation and steel mill based on imported ore. Third, the energy needs can be easily augmented through additional discoveries of gas fields possible in the Bay, while Kutubdia offers the ideal base to initiate oil and gas exploration and drilling activities. Fourth, the location of the proposed SEZ

land, it can be connected

castly by a bridge or a causeway

and could be reached within

two hours from Chittagong by

road or within one hour by

train from Dohazari, the wouth-

ern most railway point of the

exploited at Kutubdia. First, a

is not only close to the main

industries are also feasible including construction of fishing trawlers.

The main strategy of development will be to assure both foreign and domestic investors that cost of land, buildings and utilities, particularly electricity and port facilities, are all not only competitive but cheaper than anywhere else in Southeast Asta. This is the condition that should not be too difficult to fulfil notwithstanding the fact that it might call for state subsidy at the beginning.

Another important considera tion is that the utilities, electricity, water, telecommunication etc., should be operated on a commercial basis, independent of the national sys

WINDOW ON ASIA

Shahed Latif

country. It also means that all in or outbound cargo containers from the port should be able to move by all modes of transport: road, rail or coast ers. Fifth, given the fact that the SEZ is an island, custom rules and regulations will be easily enforceable at the designated entry and exit points. Sixth, apart from gas based industries, the deep-sea port should enable cost effective import of bulk cargoes in large scale based on which oil re fineries, like those in Singapore, can easily flourish for export to India where demand for petroleum products should continue to increase very rapidly. Thus the same tankers bringing in the crude might carry the finished products to Indian ports on their return journey to bring in the fresh crude from the middleeast. Sait based chemical industries is another possibility. Lastly, a separate fish harbour as well as related fish process ing industries should eventually be the basis of a billion dollar business. If the steel mill come on stream, ship building tems - avoiding the pitfalls of the existing utility services all over the country.

Separate Entity

Kutubdia would be a separate entity sustaining a very rapid rate of economic growth whose impact on the rest of the economy would be in terms of employment, technology transfer and diffusion of management skills. At least half a billion dollars worth of disposable income would be translated into additional demand for meat, milk, eggs etc., and numerous other consumer goods and services. Inevitably, intensive high-value agriculture will be boosted in the adjoining areas. In fact, at the next stage of development, the SEZ might be extended to cover the entire area south of Sangu river covering Cox's Bazar and the districts of the Hill Tracts. In this expanded phase, an integrated regional development plan including horticulture, forestry and plantation of crops in the Hill Tracts, after access roads are built, and tourism all along the coast upto Teknal, are the

grand possibilities. Manufaturing combined with agriculture, forestry, fishery, livestock and tourism are capable of generating significant spin-off effects for the rest of the economy.

The third phase of devel opment might be to expand the scope of SEZ further to the north and include fully the two former districts of Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts the south-eastern part of Bangladesh. In addition, the second phase development might be further intensified through utilisation of agriculture, forestry and mineral potentials of the Arakan province of Myanmar for mutual benefits. The resources of Arakan have hardly been tapped so far and the proposed development interactions between Bangla desh and Burma could finally put a stop to all the problems that have recently cropped up between the two countries. The friendly neighbourliness would then be permanently established. However, this is

not possible under the prevailing hostile situation. But we should draw lessons from what is currently happening between Thailand and its neighbouring countries -Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. From battlefield to the marketplace, is the new underlying theme of development between former Indo-

China and Thailand.

Bracing the Cyclone I have not mentioned the most serious limitations of my proposal. Readers must be wondering how it could be possible when Kutubdia was ravaged by cyclones and tidal waves so very recently. Such natural disasters had never in the past forced people to abandon the coast anywhere in the world including Bangladesh. If that would have been the case then typhoon infested areas of coastal China would have never flourished. Take for example Japan, the country is battered not only by typhoons and tidal waves but carthquakes are also guite frequent there. Yet Japan is the most intensively industrialised country of the world today and so much so that there is no more land available to industrialised further. Japanese industries because of high cost and environmental hazards are being relocated to other countries of the Asia Pacific region with the notable exception of Bangladesh so far

Cyclones and the huge tidal waves cannot be eliminated but they can be prevented from destroying the capital assets of development. Well-protected embankments, mangrove forest cover, stronger buildings and underground cables for electricity and telecommunication are the means to do so. In fact, the physical construction programme should be designed to withstand the forces of destruction. It is not a difficult proposition. Simple conercte structures used as cyclone shelters can prevent losses to life and property. Protection to the land through strong embankments are already in place and might be strengthened further. The cost of a well sheltered deep-water port would increase considerably but the eventual gains to the economy would far outweigh the costs. The explottation of oil and gas from the North Sea is being carried out under much more hostile conditions. If that had been commercially feasible, then why not energy development off Kutubdia?

The Shenzen style is a new approach to industrialisation and is a valid proposition for Bangladesh. By isolating development, through SEZ, away from the existing inefficient systems for production of goods and services, vigorous economic growth can be promoted. Creation of autonomous growth oriented regimes is the essence of the strategy which in turn should favourably influence course of development further inland to the country. If it begins at Teknaf, the impact should very soon reach the northern highlands at

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Chiluba Walks the Economic Tightrope

Elias Nyakutemba writes from Mufulira, Zambia

As an example of the implications of Structural Adjustment, Zambia provides an important case history. Moving a second year, its progress in 1993 will be closely watched by the international community. The economic reform programme supervised by the IMF has been vigorous. So far little has filtered down to the country's poverty-stricken majority, despite increased donor support.



FREDERICK CHILUBA A daring policy

investment act allowing foreign investors to retain all their export earnings has replaced Kaunda's restrictive act.

and the parastatal sector in a bid to slim government ex-Ambitious fiscal goals were set in the 1992 budget, including sharp reductions in the Up to 50,000 more are to lose their jobs next year, rate of inflation from 400 per mostly from state-run compacent in 1991 to 45 per cent, money supply from above 100 nies being floated for sale and from the civil service. A new per cent to 35 per cent and

economic growth was pushed from minus 1.4 per cent to plus 1.2 per cent. The budget deficit, at K20 billion in 1991. was to be cut in 1992 by more than two-thirds.

Such measures, including foreign debt write-offs of \$1 billion, reduction of annual interest payments to only \$40 million from the \$400 million previously paid to creditors abroad, should have made things much easier for the new government and the povertystricken people.

Yet on the ground, nothing worked. The government has overspent by about K8 billion and borrowed against its own limits on local credit a staggering K 36 billion. Inflation has shot up to above 100 per cent in 1992 and money supply was rising at over 80 per cent in

November. Criticisms of the government's inability to fulfil its preelection promises have sprung up everywhere, mostly centering on the unbearable cost of

Malnutrition is now said to be prevalent in nearly 50 per cent of all under 15 while at least 30 per cent of the adult population is also affected. For many, a decent meal is a luxury, even though shops are full of highly priced goods. A bitter joke is going the rounds that "Kaunda brought cholera, Chiluba has doubled it" - an apparent reference to the unprecedented death of 1,000 people in 1992 alone.

Chiluba's failure to provide alternative measures to cushion vulnerable groups from the harsh effects of the SAP and his inability to rebuild fallen services in health, education and transport remain the talking point in Zambia.

His political front, however, remains solid. In the November local government polls the ruling MMD took complete control of more than 1,000 of the 1,200 seats. This means that the MMD now con trols about 50 of the 55 district councils.

The Opposition, UNIP,

formerly the ruling party, won just over 100 scats, mainly from its stronghold of the Eastern Province, in an election nonetheless characterised by appalling apathy. Only about 13 per cent of the 1.5 million voters took part.

other key source of concern. Accusations have been levelled against some government leaders that they were enriching themselves. Several MPs, senior government officials and some ministers had their bids disqualified after the Zambia Privatisation Agency discovered that the owners had not declared their interests publicly before bidding as provided by law.

ZPA director James Matale said: "The problem is that some went through foreign companies and others through their relatives, spouses or friends which makes our work difficult."

Economists have warned 1993 will be even more diffi-

retrenchment is likely to make it more difficult for the government to control soaring inflation and money supply levels and the kwacha may be headed for further devaluations while prices will continue to rise. Yet the IMF and western

cult for Zambians. Widespread

donors expect Chiluba to act more decisively in 1993 to keep SAP on course. Said British High Commissioner to Zambia Peter Hincheliffe: "You (Chiluba) have started well, but you need to take politically hard decisions to succeed, whatever the temporary loss of

popular goodwill. Chiluba expects donors to shell out about \$ 1.5 billion to finance his cash-starved budget for 1993. Yet many Zambians agree with a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report Privatisation remains an- which warned African countries about the speed of SAP's implementation. It says, slavishly enforced SAPs could prove "disastrous for both the people and governments undertaking political and eco-

> nomic reforms". As one economist put it: "Chiluba is going to walk a real tightrope. He has reached a stage where he has to decide whether to stay on course or backslide as Kaunda used to do

> in times of real crisis". - GEMINI NEWS

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Babri mosque and thereafter

Sir, What is most strange is that even at the fag end of the twentieth century, some people in the world's largest democracy indulge in extreme fanatic activities which are synonimous to barbarism let loose. India pursues the policy of secularism through her declared constitutional commitment and yet the Government there failed to protect a most sensititive religious spot despite socalled precaution and vows. How on earth would people elsewhere in the world look upon India after the episode? The fanatics have demolished the mosque because they wanted to and have in fact built, in miniature form though, one Mandir there but at what cost? Was it impossible for any of them to pre-conccive the consequences? By now at least quite a few dozens of Mandirs have been demolished in the world as a whole including London, as per newspaper reports. The hundreds of invaluable human lives lost is just a black chapter in the history of humanity - and not just India or elsewhere. No sane person would support any torture or repression on anybody or any establishment anywhere else for what has happened in India, but none

can deny what has happened

and anyone would agree that

the whole thing is awfully dangerous from a humanitarian point of view, let alone local or ethnical interests. What is more awful is that despite assurances to the contrary the Indian provincial authorities allowed Hindu fanatics to per-

form puza there. There is no doubt that the central Government of India failed to take steps necessary in advance since this was not an incident on which postmortem was to be resorted to There could be many ways of saving the situation but they didn't do it. They relied on the extremist provincial Govt. of UP which apparently was with those who wanted to destroy the mosque. Thank God they took measures subsequently to check human disaster - they imposed curfew in dozens of cities, brought out special police and para-military forces and took a number of other steps to contain the outbreak of riots, but could they really do it? What about the hundreds who lost their lives, the thousands who got panicked and ransacked and mutilated? And after the present permission of puja performance what would happen to the injured feelings of Muslims in India and the world at large?

In Bangladesh, there is no doubt, the Govt. did whatever was possible to avert any serious reprisal. In fact, because of

the firm attitude of the Government, supported by the average citizen, peace could hardly be disturbed. Actually, most people in Bangladesh although they were angry enough, didn't want to break peace in their ownmotherland. What is still notable is that saner sections of the society have to keep vigil in the interest of Bangladesh as a whole and the Muslim brethern in India and elsewhere. If our actions here bring more miseries for our Muslim brethern in other places, would it yield any desirable benefit? Accordingly, patience and sanctity must be the say of all those who want to safeguard the society's greater interest. The situation, however, was worsened with the police firing on long marchers in Bangladesh. This again was another unfortunate incident which could, no doubt, have serious repercussions. F Alam

Hard rock at

Dhaka

Mithapukur Sir, It is heartening to note that the government has undertaken steps to resume work on Madhyapara hard rock mining project which was abandoned in the past due to

red-tapism. Mithapukur, in the district of Rangpur, where this mining

project has been commissioned, seems to have a huge stock of hard rock under ground. The proposed venture is likely to be assisted by North Korea and will involve a cost of 100 million US dollar.

It may be mentioned here that hard rock is used as a major ingredient for the construction of roads, bridges and culverts. It is vitally needed for the building of embankments to control the direction of rivers. However, like many other things, hard rock is also imported from outside to meet the requirement of our coun-

We hope that the implementation of this mining project will minimise the volume of import of this item and contribute largely to the infrastructural development of our country. Nittn Rou

Fakirerpool, Dhaka

"Sex education"

Sir, Congratulation to Mr. Md. Showkat Haider (Babu) for his write-up on the subject "sex education" which was published in The Datly Star on November 21, 1992, However, the following observations could be added:

It has been wonderful to observe that he has made an at tempt to establish the relationship between "sex" and

"hygiene" when he has said "sex is an essential part of hygiene", and consequently it has not been very clear as the whole write-up did not include many of the points on "sex" and "hygiene". Some of the points could be:

a) The words "adultery", "fornication", "paramour" and so on are found in the English language as well as in the other languages of the world and none in the whole world has yet termed these words to be the "conservatism" or "social taboo".

b) "Education" means imparting of the knowledge, abilities and the development of the character and the mental powers through the systematic intellectual and moral training of the young in the school, college, university and so on; similarly studies on "sex" could be undertaken by any person who has attained the maturity (university) and these studies are done all over the world including Bangladesh. "Scientific sex education" contained in the write-up is simply a hyperbole, since no scientist has yet given any new idea more than the connotations contained in the word "sex" from the very beginning. A bull is attracted to a cow only when it is the right time, hower r, an OX or a bullock is " affiacted to a

cow and yet most of the bul-

locks or the OXEN are healthy. Now in the animal kingdom and in the rational animal kingdom, so far as the reproductivity is concerned, it is the same urge. But the rational animals (human beings) will have to bear the consequences and the responsibilities arising out of the use of "sex" and the use of "sex" without the rationality, responsibility and the capability of the maintenance would amount to irrationality and that is the point where the social regulations are put, just as the university would formulate the rules and as the grammar would regulate how to use the parts of speech.

The veneral diseases and AIDS are mostly the results of the misuse of "sex"; of course some times it could be because of different reasons.

Divorce cases recorded in

Bangladesh will prove that most of the times it takes place because of the following reasons (a) adultery, (b) paramour, (c) lust for more "sex", (d) dowry and so on, and very seldom because of misunderstanding. Divorce is a global problem, and it is not limited to Bangladesh only, and in Bangladesh divorce is noted because of the non-compliance of the family laws.

Andrew D'Costa Dhaka