

## A New Security Council

Japan's claim for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (SC) received a boost on Friday from Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany when, during a visit to India, he treated Tokyo's demand in this respect as more urgent than that of his own country. Although the German leader was speaking during an interview with a television network of Japan where he is now assured of a warm welcome, the support for Tokyo's position was made from the soil of India, yet another aspirant for a permanent SC seat. It will be interesting to know how New Delhi has reacted to the statement of Kohl. In all probability, the German leader would placate India with other offers, such as closer economic co-operation between Bonn and New Delhi, thus responding to the honour shown to him by the conferment of the Nehru Award by the Government of India.

The claim of Japan for a permanent seat on the Security Council, first raised several years ago, has received wide-spread support. It is generally assumed that as an economic giant and a major regional power, Tokyo should have a more pronounced place in the UN system that it has today. In most of the UN agencies, Japan has emerged as the second largest contributor to the regular budget and a leading donor to specific projects. Until recently, Japan had been relatively slow in placing its nationals in high-level jobs in the UN system. Here, too, the position is gradually changing to Tokyo's advantage. Two of the leading UN bodies, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), are now headed by Japanese, while another runs the UN operation in Cambodia. Significantly enough, Japan has also provided a contingent for the peace-keeping force in the strife-torn former Indo-Chinese state, in a dramatic development that gives due recognition to Tokyo's role in the changing world.

As the process gains momentum, a permanent seat for Japan on the SC may well become something of a fait accompli. However, the issue cannot be taken in isolation. To a large extent, the expansion of the SC, even by one additional member with the power of veto, should be linked to the much talked about reforms in the world body, especially where the charter governing the work of the SC is concerned. Some even question the need for veto in the post-cold war period, when the urgent need to maintain a superficial agreement between the Western powers, especially the United States, and the former Soviet Union no longer exists. Should big power hegemonism make way for more democratic majority decisions at the SC level?

Yet another pressing question relates to claims by several other countries for permanent seats on SC. Notwithstanding the gesture made by Kohl towards Japan, Germany remains a serious contender. The claim by the developing world cannot also be pushed aside. India, Brazil and Indonesia would certainly make welcome additions. Finally, shouldn't the voice of Africa be heard through, say, Senegal?

There are several conflicting compulsions. Should the reformed Security Council be a tighter, probably a leaner, body which is capable of taking hard decisions with power to enforce them or should it be a large well-represented one that reflects all regional interests but, unfortunately, moves slowly? May be a middle course can be found in the end. In the process, the world body must also give priority to the need for a new high-powered body that takes hard decisions on the economic and development front and helps in meeting the aspirations and the just demands of countries which run the danger of being marginalised in the changing world. Support from Japan to such a move would add much to its claim for a permanent seat on SC, especially in the eyes of the developing world.

## Going Seriously about Siam

Ramadan is here again to bring its centuries-old yearly spell of self-purification. If we put our heart into translating in our personal lives the ideals and objectives of *siam*, this would surely contribute in a most singular manner to our collective weal and add a new dimension and quality to our social being.

To say nothing of the merit or otherwise of going through the poses needed to show one in a devout light without taking the pains, or the pleasure, of observing the daily instructions other than fasting as ordained by religion — one can hardly ignore the fact that the Ramadan is, in the recent times at least, distinguished more by ostentation than abstinence. It is the travesty of the spirit of *siam* that is conspicuous in the social life of our land — the exercise rising in a crescendo to be crowned by an Eid-ul-Fitr which, rather than contributing to the levelling of the disparate economic classes, brings the socio-economic inequalities into a sharper focus.

Every time we enter into this month of months — a month set apart for piety and self-abnegation — it should be the duty of all Muslim citizens to set a model not only of tolerance but of sacrifice as well, not only unto themselves but more so to the members of other religious persuasion. This point has gained tremendously in urgency because of the recent subcontinental communal turmoil and the acts of vandalism and violence involving not only property and inviolability of the human person but also of the sanctity of places of worship.

The best gift of Ramadan and *siam* to the nation as a whole, inclusive of practitioners of religions other than Islam, is that as a result of the modicum of accommodation and tolerance it should infuse into the majority of the people, the society would get into a kind of rejuvenation. If this very ordinary and matter-of-course expectation fails to work and our national entity continues in its sapless ways to a shrivelling decimation of the societal being — the Ramadan will have come and gone for nothing. Many people would no doubt have fasted from before sunrise till after sunset, but *siam* would in that case be reduced to a month spiritually sterile, even corrupting with the eagerness for the goodies adorning the *iftar* table, and its objectives socially unrealised.

We wish our citizenry to work up to that rejuvenation, personal and societal, and share in the fruits of it — something sure to be realised if we mean to go about the spirit and the injunctions of *siam* with any amount of seriousness.

**T**HE biggest wreckage from the demolition of disputed Babri Masjid is the contamination of public servants. Many among them, even at high positions, rationalise and defend what has happened at Ayodhya and after. When they imbibed the Bhartiya Janata Party's thinking is difficult to say, they at least now talk in jingoistic terms.

It is not an overnight phenomenon. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has been propagating among them for a long time. Some of them have attended its shakhas (meetings) and some have been taken in by their argument that the Hindus have been "pushed for too long". The government employees also tend to go along with the wind, which is still blowing hard. Many have the impression that the BJP will come to power and hence it is better for them to adjust their sails accordingly.

Why the civil service has, by and large, lost its sheen — and sensitivity — is a long story. It began with the British. They required some Indians to rule India and they found that they could depend on them. The people, they selected directly or through competitive examinations, helped the British in their nefarious activities. The national movement was not so much suppressed by the Englishmen as by the Indians, who manned the police, the intelligence, the secretariat and some top positions. The Indian Civil Service (ICS) was a tool of tyranny before independence.

India should have demobilised the service after winning freedom — and there was

As was predicted by most observers, President Bill Clinton's foreign policy looks set to follow much the same course as charted by his immediate predecessor, but the crucial question of economic reforms on which candidate Clinton concentrated during his presidential election campaign is still to be addressed. The gravity of this issue is distinct because the world is no longer bipolar, for the moment, at least, it is distinctly unipolar.

Over the past decade or more, the US has been experiencing a huge budget deficit. When Jimmy Carter, the last Democrat president left office in 1980, the deficit stood at 70 billion dollar. By the time flamboyant Republican Ronald Reagan left the White House in 1988, the deficit had mushroomed to a massive 152.5 billion dollar.

One way traffic of deficit sprung up after ever increasing rate to 290.2 billion dollar, during world policeman Bush's four years tenure. And the deficit is expected to swell to a record 327.3 billion dollar.

The reasons attributed are varied, ranging from the tax cuts of the Reagan era and a 500 billion dollar thrift bail out since 1989, to costs incurred fighting the Gulf War and the economic recession.

The recession and quasi-automatic increases in federal spending, specially on health care, which grew from six per cent of GDP in 1965 to 13.5 per cent in 1992, widened the budget gap. And this forced Bush to renege on his 1988 campaign promise "not to raise taxes".

Clinton took office with tough choices facing his administration at home and a problematic world to deal with abroad. The American workplace, according to media reports from the States, is in the

## 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.

### Garments embargo

Sir, The US business community has expressed concern about employing children in our garments factories. They have thought it to be an inhuman way of earning bread. But to a layman like me, the matter is mysterious. My heart is filled with hope when I see hundreds of girls coming out and going to garments' factories. At least they are not earning by selling their chastity as the girls of many other third world countries are doing even if under compulsion. Their innocent faces seem to me to be morally very high. Their honest earnings (whatever small that may be) have given them a sense of self-dependence.

In a country where 50% of the population consists of women, their contribution to our crippled economy is no less meagre.

The garment industries' with their helping hands have given us a place in the western markets. We are already ridden with innumerable problems. If a garments trade embargo is imposed on us, it will make a deviation from what esteemed President Bill Clinton said, "there is no clear division to-

# The Contaminated Bureaucracy

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such a proposal by some Indian ICS officers — but the Congress rulers decided otherwise. The same instruments, faulty and filthy, became the instruments of a free country. The ICS was rechristened as the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). Toadies of yesterday became nationalists. Many of them even began to believe that they had contributed to the ousting of subjugation. But there was no doubt about their loyalty, first to the British government and then to that of the Congress. It showed how easily they changed with the change in rulers, swearing in the name of nationalism.

After independence, Indira Gandhi was the first prime minister who tested their commitment to the traditions and the rules of service. They were found wanting. When she said that their commitment was to the economy philosophy she was doing out at that time to win a political battle, they supported her.

Even the topmost civil servants at that time did not talk of the commitment to the Constitution or the rule of law but to the 'progress', whatever it meant. Then it became a fashion to be progressive. A few civil servants, who did not think that way, were pushed into the background.

The emergency (1975-77), imposed by Mrs Gandhi, saw how palpable was the civil

service. Highhanded and arbitrary actions were carried out with impunity. The ethical considerations inherent in public behaviour became generally dim and in many cases beyond the mental grasp of many of the public functionaries.

Desire for self-preservation, as admitted by a number of public servants at various levels, became the sole motivation for their official actions and behaviour. Anxiety to survive at any cost formed the key

party or the other to get plum assignments.

Therefore, the chameleon-like civil service is following its ethos when it is tilting towards the BJP, which it believes may be a winner one day. There is no pride left in doing a correct thing. The service is just not aware of what is wrong. Over the years, for many public functionaries, the dividing line between moral and immoral has ceased to exist.

Yet the situation can be re-

## BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

note of approach to the problems that came before many of them. The fear generated by the mere threat and without even the actual use of the weapon of detention became so pervasive that the general run of public servants obeyed the orders blindly.

The end of emergency did not give back the bureaucracy the clarity it enjoyed once. In fact, it became more opportunistic than before, currying favour from whichever party came to power: first, the Janata, later the Congress(I), then the Janata Dal and again the Congress(I). Some officers even aligned openly with one

tried if the rulers were to ensure that the services would stay impartial and independent. But when they use them for their political ends, the public servants too let their prejudices to dictate them at times. Nonetheless, the screening of governments is necessary to weed out the fundamentalists.

The conduct rules say that civil servants cannot participate in political activities, nor can they behave in a manner which would reflect a bias for a particular party, caste or creed. All those employees, whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians, who are

known for their communal support should be dismissed after a departmental inquiry. There is also a case for banning the entry of such people into the service.

The role of police, also an arm of the bureaucracy, has been increasingly reprehensible. Again and again it has been found acting on communal considerations, siding with the majority community. Most casualties among the Muslims in the recent riots have been by the police bullets, not only in Bombay but in the communist-run Calcutta.

Senior officers have explained that long duty hours, low emoluments and poor living conditions have made policemen indifferent to human values. But they cannot run away from the fact that many among them have been influenced by the propaganda against the Muslims that the RSS has been carrying on for some years. They have even infiltrated the police ranks.

The government machinery is too weak to meet the challenges. In some states the chief ministers are themselves behind the police excesses; the victims are either critics or the members of a community which the group in power does not like.

In states like UP and Bihar the situation is so bad that private organisations and individual groups rule the country-

side. In certain areas they exact a "protection" fee every month. In both states the nexus between the gangs and politicians is an established fact. And the police are also involved.

In fact, over the years the contamination of the police has assumed serious proportions and even the top is not free from taint. Money can change a First Information Report (FIR) and the most wanted criminals escape arrest by sharing the booty on regular basis. A *thana* (police station) is on sale depending on the potentiality of black marketing and trafficking in the area which it commands.

The departure of the British has not changed the colonial traditions substantially. The governance is still rough and ready. The maintenance of law and order demands often firm action, which was deplorably missing in the Bombay riots. But political considerations dictate both the rulers and the bureaucracy. The attitude of both is largely characterised by a paralysis of the will to do the right and proper thing.

The point to consider is not whether the bureaucracy has guts or not but whether the people guiding it are following correct norms and procedures. The protectors of law and order have become disrupters and biased. Communalists, politicians and the bureaucracy tend to be on the same side and they do not take any action when it is due or move in only half-heartedly because they are part and parcel of the same system. The rules are there. The laxity is in taking strong and impartial action. It is time that something is done to remedy this.

# Clinton Faces Challenge of 'Change'

by Nazme Sabina

America's internal situation is so suffocating that Clinton's domestic policies are unable to revive the picture, rather he may conduct a tour de force over the world economy's landscape to restore America's "unipolar" image of supremacy, through domination of world market, as his predecessors did.

grip of one of the biggest shake-ups it has ever seen. Not only blue-collar workers are being laid off but 2.8 million white-collar workers have lost their jobs in the last five years and major companies like IBM and GM are undergoing massive layoffs.

President Clinton, to breathe from this suffocation, has proposed a plan of near-record tax increase to prick the deficit balloon and shift the focus of public and private spending from consumption to investment. The President proposed to take up a 31 billion short-term stimulus package to encourage business to invest in new equipment and to 'create jobs' in public works. If approved by Congress, long-term measures would translate into the steepest increase in taxes in US history.

Clinton is seeking to trim the red ink by 500 billion or more over the next five years, equally divided between spending cuts and tax increase. Seventy per cent of new taxes will be paid by those who make more than 100,000 dollar a year. The other side of the coin calls for spending increases: 15 billion dollar for an investment tax credit and 16 billion dollar for job-intensive projects.

Clinton, who projected himself as the "change agent" during the campaign race, is determined to steer "a new course" for the US economy that will quickly pay off with 500,000 jobs.

Clinton is glad because "consumer confidence is up

since election". He emphasised, "We will build an America where even the most privileged pay their fair share, not because we want to soak the rich, but because we want to stop seeking the middle class and ask anybody to bear their fair share." But he also reminded, "the price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change."

The irony is that in November 1992, candidate Clinton had said, tax only the super-rich, but in February 1993, President Clinton's target gets down to small business and the middle class.

Republicans term Clinton's call to economic arms as "too long" on tax hikes and "too short" on spending cuts. They are skeptical that the administration was cutting spending far enough before asking for more taxes. According to them, federal spending cuts are the best way to reduce budget deficit. They also believe in "preserving" much of the nation's current health care system. House Republican leader Bob Michel said to Clinton, "When your domestic programmes and policies are based on sound economic principles, common sense and traditional American values, we, Republicans, will be with you."

Meanwhile labour and energy intensive industries including retailing trade and transportation and health care would be hit "hardest" by the proposed changes. Business executives will feel the "Pinch"

from a hike in corporate income tax which would "stifle" reviving business activity. According to them, the plan to restore the country to long-term economic health would amount to nothing more than a return to the "failed" fiscal policies of the 1970s and 80s.

At present, Clinton returns to campaign mode and begins the hard task of selling to the American people his vision of a new economic order, a combination of "shot-in-the-arm" economic stimulus and "across-the-board" sacrifice. But "sacrifice isn't just a presidential code word for more taxes, more spending and more mandates for Washington," Senate Minority leader Bob Dole said. "That's the kind of sacrifice that will break the back of middle-class America, and lead us right into economic ruin."

In America where "consumer" and "person" have become virtual synonyms, success is measured by the amount they consume, how much sacrifice are the consumers ready to "buy"?

The consumer society was born in the United States in the twenties, when brand names became household words processed and packaged things made their widespread debut and concentrated at the centre of America. When recession hit the US, everyone from the president on down began begging loyal Americans to spend. The impeccable: "if no one buys, no one sells, and if no one sells, no one works."

For Clinton, the prospect for restructuring the present economy is daunting. The consume-or-decline argument, which holds high consumption indispensable for employing workers and combatting deprivation, is ungrounded. It has been proved high consumption is a precondition to neither full employment nor the end of poverty.

America's internal situation is so suffocating that Clinton's domestic policies are unable to revive the picture, rather he may conduct a tour de force over the world economy's landscape to restore America's "unipolar" image of supremacy, through domination of world market, as his predecessors did.

The world trade nightmare, is one in which there is a Eurocentric Deutsche mark bloc, a US driven dollar bloc and the yen bloc. China with growth rates in some area as high as 20 per cent, a GDP already larger than Germany's and the "sweet sour" taste of capitalism in millions of mouths, appears as the mover and the shaper of the coming decade.

No one has learned the lesson faster than US traders — industry lobbyists, from airlines to minivan manufacturers coming at Clinton from every direction, pleading for and getting protectionist help. That there was a question as to what kind of trader Clinton would be, on the rare occasions, where he mentioned the topic during the election campaign, he called himself a "free

trader", but the applause line was always the steadiest. "If other countries don't start by our rules we'll play by them." Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, a former lobbyist distilled the message at his confirmation hearings, saying "we have to stop getting rolled".

On the other hand, while the world begins to digest 'stimulus' package, Japan and Britain elicit little response. Because much of the speech has already been factored into markets and investors now much more "interested" in US trade policies toward Japan than in its domestic economic policies.

Secondly, despite some disengagement in both parts of the globe, the US will continue to provide military security in Asia and Europe. "It is very important," says a former Bush adviser, "that we assure Japan and Germany, as well as their neighbours, that US will continue, as the sole superpower, to maintain a strong military presence in both regions and defend and expand the world trading system." Clinton will sing from the same hymnal.

And thirdly, as global competition hits up, spying among allies will grow more intense, says Peter Schweizer, author of the recently published book, "Friendly Spies". Despite its persistent denials, Schweizer says, the US intelligence has spied on friends and allies in the past and American companies such as Motorola are setting up their own business intelligence units. "In the New World order," he says "yesterday's political allies are today's economic competitor". Schweizer foresees a fundamental shift in intelligence priorities. "Business secrets have become more vital than military secrets," he says, "and counting machine tools is now more important than tracking the number of battle tanks."

them enough comfort and freedom. Their sojourn is no longer safe here. This is one of the dampeners of their motivation for seeking short refuge here. The fast disappearance of their swamp and marshy land has added to this factor.

Besides, maintaining ecological balance, the guest birds enrich our aesthetic frill. The situation calls for strict enforcement of the law providing adequate incentives to the guest birds, so that our land can become safe harbour for them again.

Golam Nabil, Nasirabad, Chittagong.

### Letters to the editor

Sir, A letter by Mr K R Zakhmi, Khulna, published in your columns on January 16 had captured my attention. It seemed from his expression that some letter-writers, including myself, are doing a great sin by sending copies of our letters to different newspapers for publication. Mr Zakhmi purchases more than one newspaper and he won't like to read second hand articles or comments specially second hand letters (He hadn't, however, mentioned whether he disliked reading second hand news items supplied by BSS/UNB).

Well, our noble intention to cover large number of readers by sending the same letters to different newspapers still stands valid because not all the

people purchase all the newspapers like Mr Zakhmi. Moreover, letters column is meant for the readers, hence everyone who reads and subscribes to a newspaper reserves the right to send his letters to that newspaper. I can safely say that not only I but all the letter-writers who send their letters to different newspapers definitely do so with a noble mind and noble intention. It appears from Mr Zakhmi's letter that he can no more tolerate even our existence in the world of writing.

Mr Zakhmi in his letter wrote — "Mr M Zaidul Haque has developed a mania for letter-writing. Previously I had an idea that a write-up usually sees the day's light only when it can satisfy the intellectual standards fixed by the newspaper to which it is sent for publication. But now after reading Mr Zakhmi's letter I understand that writing habit is a sort of mania".

Secondly, if my record is correct, only one gentleman recently raised objection on sending same letters to more than one newspaper. Of course, he didn't use impolite words in his criticism. Another gentleman supported his view by writing a letter to the same newspaper. And Mr Zakhmi, perhaps, is the third, but first in 'The Daily Star' raising same sort of objection. Of course, a lot of letters upholding our rights/ justifications to send same letters to different newspapers had also appeared in protest of the first one's ob-

jection. Though our intention is noble, still to respect the public sentiments, I would like to invite opinions from the newspaper readers on this matter for judging the readers' stand over the dispute. And at the same time I would request the Editors' Council to take up this issue in their next meeting's agenda for adopting a policy decision in the greater welfare of the public.

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

### Biman flight

Sir, It was about two years ago that on a cold wintry night I was stranded at Bangkok's international airport for over five hours due to Biman's delay in the Bangkok-Dhaka flight which finally reached Dhaka, after taking off from Bangkok, well past midnight.

This time, a fortnight ago, while on my trip to Singapore and back to Dhaka via Bangkok, my travel agent once again enquired whether he would book me on Biman for the Bangkok-Dhaka sector. Remembering the past I wanted to decline but being a nationalist I accepted the booking hoping against hope that Biman this time would be 'on time'.

The flight of 7th February '93 BG-077 was scheduled to take off Bangkok at 1400 hours local time and arrive Dhaka ZIA at 3:30 pm. At Bangkok, I

reported to the airport at 1200 hours, as per schedule, minutes ticked by and hours passed, there was no information of any kind on the TV screen or at the airport counter. Finally, after about nearly two hours, the counter opened and a Thai representative of Biman announced that the flight from Dhaka would arrive Bangkok at about 5:25 pm. The plane arrived Bangkok at about 6:30 pm and I finally arrived Dhaka once again around midnight after a delay of six hours.

It was a bright and clear February day with exceptionally fine weather at Bangkok. There were about two dozen other airlines at Bangkok airport operating from all over the world who were maintaining their schedule dead on time. But regrettably Biman Bangladesh was hours behind time as usual.

Will the authorities in Biman wake up? I, being a Bangladeshi, have been bitten twice and thrice shy, needless to say about the foreigners who, for sure, will not tolerate and accept such delays and inconveniences.

The world is moving into the 21st century and Biman at this rate will definitely be left out internationally in the air trade until and unless some drastic measures are taken for maintaining the schedules at least, which is a basic prerequisite for operating a successful airline.

Paruber Anwar Chittagong.